

**We ask you Lord Jesus to make us increase and abound in love for one another and for all, so that you may establish our hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father when you come with all your saints. (3:13)**

**God of peace, would you yourself sanctify us completely. May our whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We praise you that you who call us are faithful, and you will do it. (5:23-24)**

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## **Study 1: Overview**

In your group read through the whole of the book of 1 Thessalonians.

As you do, note down:

- ❖ Any themes you notice (words or phrases that are repeated often)
- ❖ Any verses you don't understand
- ❖ Any verses that stand out to you
- ❖ Any questions you want answered

## Background Check

To discover what happened in Philippi (2:2) and Thessalonica (2:17), read Acts 16:11-40 and Acts 17:1-10a.

Discuss the following questions.

1. What is your first impression of the Thessalonian church?
2. What reasons did you find for why Paul wrote the letter?
3. What themes did you notice? Any words or phrases that are repeated often?
4. From this first reading is there anything God is particularly challenging or encouraging you with?

***Pray for one another about the things discussed above. Close your prayer time with one of the prayers from 1 Thessalonians printed inside the booklet cover.***

## **Study 2: Work of Faith, Labour of Love**

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**

1. What is Paul thankful for?
2. What motivates the Thessalonians' work, labour and steadfastness?
3. How does Paul describe them? (v4)
4. How does he know this to be true? (v5-7)
5. In what ways are they imitating Paul and Jesus? (See also Hebrews 12:2, Acts 5:41)
6. What makes them a model church? (v7-10)
7. What does Paul say about Jesus? (v10)
8. How does he describe the Thessalonians' response? (v9)
9. Why do you think he writes this since they know it already?
10. ***What do you think is our reputation as a church? What would you like it to be?***

**Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

11. Was it easy for Paul to keep preaching Christ? (v1-2) Why did he keep doing it?

12. What did Paul and his team **not** do when bringing the gospel to the Thessalonians? (v3-6) Why is this important?

13. How was Paul like a mother to them? (v7-9)

14. How was Paul like a father to them? (v10-12)

**15. Who are the people who have shared not only the gospel but also their lives with you?**

**16. Who can you be exhorting, encouraging, and charging to walk worthy of God?**

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### **Study 3: Fear, Joy and Prayer**

#### **Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16**

1. What happened when the Thessalonians heard the word of God? (v13-14)
2. How does this confirm that Paul's coming to them was not in vain (2:1)?
3. Why do you think Paul writes so strongly about these Jews? (v14-16)

#### **Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5**

4. What did Paul want to do? What prevented him? How did he feel? What action did he take?
5. What was Paul's main concern? Why was he worried for them?

#### **Read 1 Thessalonians 3:6-10**

6. What report has he received from Timothy?

7. What is Paul's response to this news?

**8. *Have you ever received news about another Christian that caused you to rejoice? Can you think of someone you could encourage with news of your faith?***

**Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13**

9. What does Paul pray for?

**10. *What insight does today's section give us into Paul's relationship with the churches he plants?***

***Pray for one another using the words of 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13.***



## **Study 4: Walking to Please God**

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8**

1. With what authority does Paul now instruct the Thessalonians?(v1,2,8)
2. These are not new instructions (v1-2), so why does he repeat them in this letter?
3. We are told (v3) that God's will for his people is sanctification. What does this word mean?
4. What does it mean to abstain from sexual immorality? Is this just for the single ladies?
5. Who is wronged when sexual sin is committed? (v6)
6. What motivations are given for holiness?
7. ***What is your response to sexual temptation? Do you flee (1 Cor 6:18) or flirt?***
8. ***Why don't we talk about this very much?***
9. ***How can we help each other to obey this command?***

**Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12**

10. Can we ever love one another enough?

**11. How do you see brotherly love being expressed among us? How can we do so more and more?**

12. Living quietly and minding your own business doesn't seem like much to aspire to! What motivation does Paul give for this ambition?

**13. Recall Paul's own example in 1Thess 2:9. What does proper living before outsiders look like for you?**

***Pray for one another about the things discussed above. Close your prayer time with one of the prayers from 1 Thessalonians printed inside the booklet cover.***

## **Study 5: Steadfastness of Hope**

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

1. This section of teaching is new for the Thessalonians. What seems to have prompted it?
2. What truth forms the foundation for Paul's teaching here? (v14)
3. What can we expect at the coming of Jesus? (See also Matthew 24:30-31, John 5:25,28)
4. Paul writes of those who have died in the Lord as having *fallen asleep*. What is comforting in this image?
5. Read verse 14 again carefully. Where are those who have fallen asleep now?
6. Paul writes of those *who are left until the coming of Jesus* (v15,17). What might we have been left to do?
7. ***What encouragement are these words to you? (v18)***
8. ***How does the expectation of the coming of Jesus shape your response to death?***

**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

9. When writing about Jesus' coming Paul uses the images of a thief in the night and the onset of labour pains (v1-3). What is evoked by these images? (See also Luke 12:35-40)

10. List out the contrasts between the Thessalonian believers and those round them. (v4-10)

The Thessalonians	The Others

11. How does Paul write of faith, love and hope in these verses? Why do we need to put on armour?

**12. What encouragement are these words to you? (v11)**

**13. How does the expectation of the coming of Jesus shape how you live?**

**Pray for one another about the things discussed above. Close your prayer time with one of the prayers from 1 Thessalonians printed inside the booklet cover.**

## **Study 6: We Ask and We Urge**

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28**

***This last section contains many instructions. As we go through take time to discuss what obedience will look like in our church. Be specific and practical!***

#### Verses 12-13

1. What are the three characteristics of church leaders given here?
2. Do you see our leaders working among us in this way?
3. What are the three responses required of God's people?
4. How will the church being at peace help the leaders?
5. How are we doing with this?

#### Verses 14-15

6. Why do the idle need admonishing?(See also 2 Thess 3:6-12)
7. What kind of encouragement and help might the fainthearted and weak need?
8. Why is patience so important?
9. How hard is it to refrain from pay-back? What are we to do instead?

Verses 16-18

10. How is it possible to be always rejoicing and thankful?

11. What does it mean to pray without ceasing?

12. What difference does it make to know that this is what God wills for us?

Verses 19-22

13. How were the Thessalonians to deal with prophecies?

14. Now we have the completed scriptures, how do these verses apply to us?

Verses 23-24

15. What is Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians?

16. What is the promise?

***Now we've finished our studies in 1 Thessalonians, recall one thing you've been personally challenged or encouraged by, and one thing you think challenges or encourages us as a community. Share with the group and pray about these things.***

***Close your prayer time with the prayers from 1 Thessalonians printed inside the booklet cover.***