

God our Father, we ask that you would make us worthy of your calling. Please would you fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by your power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in us, according to your grace. Amen

God of eternal hope and good comfort, direct our hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ, so we may be established in every good work and word. Amen

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Study 1: Overview

The church in Thessalonica was founded by Paul and his team during his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-10a). Persecution quickly arose from the Jews, and Paul and Silas (Silvanus) were forced to flee. When he could, Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to establish and encourage the believers. Timothy's positive report of their faith prompted Paul's first letter. In it he commended their faith, hope and love, assured them of the eternal fate of those who died in the Lord, reminded them about the return of Christ, and exhorted them to godly living.

This second letter to the Thessalonian church was probably written quite soon after the first.

In your group read through the whole of the book of **2 Thessalonians**.

As you do, note down:

- ❖ Any verses you don't understand
- ❖ Any verses that stand out to you
- ❖ Any questions you want answered

Study 2: Worthy of the Kingdom

Read 2 Thessalonians 1

1. What does Paul give thanks for? (v3)
2. What is the present experience of the Thessalonians? (v4)
3. What is their response? (v4)
4. ***Do you think it can be said of us that “our faith is growing abundantly”? What does/would this look like?***
5. ***Do you think it can be said of us that “the love of every one of you for one another is increasing”? What does/would this look like?***
6. ***How does verse 4 help us to pray for the church enduring persecution?***

Read again 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

7. What is the connection between steadfastness and faith (v4), and being considered worthy of the kingdom of God?
8. What will be the future experience of those who suffer for their faith?
9. When will relief surely come?

10. What will be the fate of those who afflict the church?

11. How do you respond to the images of Jesus in these verses?

12. How do these verses help us pray for the church enduring persecution?

13. How do these verses help us pray for those who persecute the church?

Read again 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

14. What does Paul pray for the Thessalonian church?

15. What does it mean that Jesus is glorified in the church? (v10,12)

16. What does it mean that we are glorified in Jesus? (v12)

17. What will our church be like as we pray this for ourselves?

Use the ideas and words of 2 Thessalonians 1 to pray for one another, our church, and the persecuted church.

Study 3: Our Lord Will Come

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1. What seems to have troubled the Thessalonians?

2. Complete the basic sequence of events outlined by Paul:
Vs 3: The R_____ comes first
Vs 3, 8: The M_____ of L_____ is revealed
Vs 5: J_____ comes and K_____ the L_____ One.

3. What are we told about the Man of Lawlessness? (v3,4,9-12)

4. See **Matthew 24:4-16**. What did Jesus say about these things?

5. Paul speaks of a restraining force. What is the purpose of this?

6. Why do people follow the lawless one?

7. ***In verse 10-12, what is the connection between not believing the truth and taking pleasure in unrighteousness? How do we see this in our world today?***

8. Do God's people have anything to fear from these events?

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

9. In verse 12, "chosen as firstfruits" can also be translated as "chosen from the beginning". What have the Thessalonian believers been chosen for?

10. How were they called by God?

11. What is the end goal?

12. How can the Thessalonians be sure of these things?

13. Where does Paul direct his readers to find comfort and hope?

The Thessalonian church seemed to have expected Jesus' return any day. Indeed, some were afraid they might have missed it! How much does the coming of our Lord Jesus and our being gathered together to him feature in your thinking?

What are the dangers of thinking about these things too much?

What are the dangers of thinking about these things too little?

Where is your confidence in the midst of rebellion, upheaval and the coming of the Lord?

Study 4: Prayers and Commands

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

1. What does Paul ask the Thessalonians to pray for?
2. What does he expect God to do for the Thessalonians? Why?
3. What does Paul expect of the Thessalonians? Why?
4. ***Discuss the connection between obedience and having hearts directed to God's love and Christ's steadfastness.***
5. ***How do these verses help us pray for our church and our leaders?***

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

6. What is the command?
7. What example did Paul and his friends give the Thessalonians?
8. Why is "walking in idleness" such a big deal?

9. How is the church to treat anyone who doesn't obey this command? What would that actually look like? What is the goal?

10. Why do you think Paul prays for the Lord's peace?

11. *Is there a difference between not being willing and not being able to work?*

12. *How is the church to care for the genuinely needy? (See also Acts 4:32-35, 1 Timothy 5:3-16, Phil 4:14-20.) What opportunities do we have to do this?*

13. *Do you ever grow weary of doing good? How can we help each other press on? (Recall 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12)*

Now we've finished our studies in 2 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.