

PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES

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I THESSALONIANS

STUDY GUIDE



I THESSALONIANS

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 17:1-13

Acts 20:4

Acts 27:2

Philippians 4:15-16

I Thessalonians

II Timothy 4:10

THEME

In this letter, Paul gives instructions on proper Christian conduct to the believers in Thessalonica. He also gives instructions concerning the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. His instructions on godly living are for the purpose of preparing the Thessalonian believers for the return of Jesus.

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Thessalonica (modern day Saloniki/Thessaloniki, Greece) was a prominent seaport city in the Macedonian province. It was located at the northernmost point of the Thermaic Gulf (modern day Gulf of Salonika).
- B. The city is believed to have been founded around 315 BC by Cassander. He named the city after his wife, Thessalonica, the sister of Alexander the Great and daughter of Philip II of Macedonia.
- C. Paul visited the city of Thessalonica during his second missionary journey.
- D. For three sabbaths, Paul went to the Jewish synagogue in Thessalonica and talked with them about the sufferings of Christ, declaring Jesus to be the Christ. (Acts 17:2-3)
- E. Some of the Jews were persuaded by Paul's teaching, but others opposed his teaching and incited a public disturbance. After the disturbance, Paul and Silas left Thessalonica and went to Berea. (Acts 17:4-10)

- F. The comment, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too,” refers to Paul and his companions, who were preaching the gospel of Jesus in Thessalonica. (Acts 17:6)

II. CHAPTER ONE

- A. It appears that the letter written to the church at Thessalonica was a joint effort. The first verse states that it is from Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. (I Thessalonians 1:1)
- B. This church is identified as one that is in God the Father and Jesus the Christ. (I Thessalonians 1:1)
- C. Paul and his companions extended grace and peace, which come from Father God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to these believers. (I Thessalonians 1:1)
- D. Paul and his companions gave thanks to God for these Thessalonian believers and always remembered them when they prayed. (I Thessalonians 1:2)
- E. Paul and his companions remembered the acts of faith, labor of love, cheerful endurance, and anticipation of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ that had been demonstrated by the Thessalonian believers before God the Father. (I Thessalonians 1:3)
- F. The Thessalonian believers understood that they were chosen by God. (I Thessalonians 1:4)
- G. Paul declared that the gospel they preached was not presented to the Thessalonians in word only, but it was also presented in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with confidence. (I Thessalonians 1:5)
- H. The Thessalonian believers knew the conduct and sincerity of Paul and his companions. (I Thessalonians 1:5)
- I. Paul states that the Thessalonian believers, after receiving the word with much affliction and joy in the Holy Spirit, became followers of his team and the Lord. (I Thessalonians 1:6)
- J. The Thessalonian believers were an example to all the believers in Macedonian and Achaia. (I Thessalonians 1:7)

- K. From Thessalonica, the word of the Lord resounded, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place that the faith of the Thessalonian believers was circulated. (I Thessalonians 1:8)
- L. Because of the renowned faith of the Thessalonian believers, Paul did not have to say anything on their behalf. (I Thessalonians 1:8)
- M. The lifestyle of the Thessalonian believers proved the great reception given to Paul and his companions. These believers had abandoned idol worship and turned to serve the true and living God. (I Thessalonians 1:9)
- N. These Thessalonian believers were waiting for the return of God's Son, Jesus, Whom He had raised from the dead. (I Thessalonians 1:10)
- O. It is Jesus Who has delivered the believer from the wrath to come. (I Thessalonians 1:10)

III. CHAPTER TWO

- A. Paul declared that the Thessalonian believers knew that he and his companions did not come to Thessalonica in vain. (I Thessalonians 2:1)
- B. Although Paul and Silas had been persecuted and abused in Philippi, they were still bold to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Thessalonians, even in the midst of opposition. (I Thessalonians 2:2)
- C. Paul's appeal to the Thessalonians was not one of fraudulence, impurity, or deceitfulness. (I Thessalonians 2:3)
- D. By God's approval, Paul had been entrusted with the gospel of Jesus the Christ. Paul's proclamation of the gospel was not to please people, but God, Who tests our hearts. (I Thessalonians 2:4)
- E. Paul declared that the Thessalonian believers knew that he did not at any time use words of flattery; neither was he motivated by greed. God was Paul's witness to this truth. (I Thessalonians 2:5)

- F. Paul and his companions did not seek glory from people; neither were they burdensome to the Thessalonians or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ they could have been. They refused to abuse their authority. (I Thessalonians 2:6)
- G. Paul describes their behavior as gentle, like a nurse caring for children. (I Thessalonians 2:7)
- H. Because of their affectionate feelings for the Thessalonians, Paul and his companions were willing not only to give the gospel of God to these whom they loved, but they were also willing to give their own souls. (I Thessalonians 2:8)
- I. Paul reminded the Thessalonian believers about his labor and distress. He and his companions had worked both day and night so that they would not be a financial burden to those to whom they presented the gospel of God. (I Thessalonians 2:9)
- J. Paul tells these believers that both they and God are witnesses to the devotion, integrity, and innocence of his companions and himself when they were at Thessalonica. (I Thessalonians 2:10)
- K. Paul declared that he exhorted, encouraged, and dealt with the Thessalonian believers just as a father would his own child. (I Thessalonians 2:11)
- L. He wanted the Thessalonian believers to live in a manner that was pleasing to the Lord, Who had invited them into His kingdom and glory. (I Thessalonians 2:12)
- M. Paul continually thanked God for the Thessalonian believers who heard and received the word he preached. They did not receive the word as a man's message; they received it as it truly is—the word of God. (I Thessalonians 2:13)
- N. God's word is active in those who believe it. (I Thessalonians 2:13)
- O. Paul told the Thessalonian believers that they were following the pattern of the churches of God in Judea who were established in Jesus Christ. Like the Jews in the churches of Judea, the Thessalonian believers were also persecuted by their own countrymen. (I Thessalonians 2:14)

- P. The unbelieving Jews killed Jesus and their own prophets. They also persecuted Paul and his companions. They were not pleasing to God and opposed everyone. (I Thessalonians 2:15)
- Q. These unbelieving Jews prohibited Paul and his companions from preaching the gospel to the Gentiles so they, too, could be saved. Because of their opposition to the gospel, these unbelieving Jews increased their sins to the point that the wrath of God was sure to come upon them. (I Thessalonians 2:16)
- R. Although Paul and the Thessalonian believers were physically separated for a short time, they were not separated in heart. Paul greatly desired to see them and put forth much effort to do so. (I Thessalonians 2:17)
- S. Paul had determined to visit the Thessalonian believers on different occasions, but Satan had hindered him. (I Thessalonians 2:18)
- T. Paul assured the Thessalonian believers that they were his hope, joy, and crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His advent. (I Thessalonians 2:19)
- U. Paul told the Thessalonian believers that they were his glory and delight. (I Thessalonians 2:20)

IV. CHAPTER THREE

- A. Paul explained that when he and his companions could no longer remain silent, they thought it good to be left alone at Athens. (I Thessalonians 3:1)
- B. He sent Timothy, whom he called his brother, his minister, and co-laborer of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ, to establish and console the Thessalonian believers regarding their faith. (I Thessalonians 3:2)
- C. Paul did not want the Thessalonian believers to be disturbed by the opposing forces to which they were subjected because of their faith in Jesus Christ. (I Thessalonians 3:3)
- D. He had warned the Thessalonian believers of the coming opposition with which they were now confronted. (I Thessalonians 3:4)

- E. When Paul could no longer restrain himself, he sent Timothy to Thessalonica to ascertain the faith of the Thessalonian believers. Paul was concerned that through temptation, the believers might succumb, and his labor among them would be in vain. (I Thessalonians 3:5)
- F. When Timothy returned to Paul from Thessalonica, he brought good news. He told Paul of the faith and love of the Thessalonian believers. They had good memories of Paul and greatly desired to see him, just as he desired to see them. (I Thessalonians 3:6)
- G. Although Paul was in distress and faced tribulation, he was comforted when he heard about the faith of the Thessalonian believers. (I Thessalonians 3:7)
- H. Paul's life had been invigorated when he heard that the Thessalonian believers persevered in the Lord. (I Thessalonians 3:8)
- I. He asked, "What thanks can we give to God in return for you and for the joy we have received because of you?" (I Thessalonians 3:9)
- J. Paul declared that he had prayed night and day to see the face of these Thessalonian believers so that he could consummate anything lacking in their faith. (I Thessalonians 3:10)
- K. He desired that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ would direct his way to these Thessalonian believers. (I Thessalonians 3:11)
- L. Paul expressed his desire for the Lord to increase these believers abundantly in love toward one another and toward everyone, in the same manner that Paul's love had increased for them. (I Thessalonians 3:12)
- M. The reason Paul wanted these believers to increase in love was so that their hearts would be established blameless, thereby setting them apart in the presence of God the Father when the Lord Jesus Christ returns with all the saints. (I Thessalonians 3:13)

V. CHAPTER FOUR

- A. Paul exhorted the Thessalonian believers to live according to the way that he had taught them so they would please God and continue to excel. (I Thessalonians 4:1)
- B. He reminded these believers of the mandate given to them by him from the Lord. (I Thessalonians 4:2)
- C. Paul revealed God's will to them regarding purity--they must abstain from sexual immorality. (I Thessalonians 4:3)
- D. He declared that each of these believers knew how to control his vessel (body) in purity and dignity, thereby abstaining from the passionate desires that controlled the unbelieving Gentiles. (I Thessalonians 4:4-5)
- E. Paul instructed them not to exceed their limits and violate their brethren in any matter. The Lord is the avenger of all who do such things. Paul had already warned them and declared the validity of his warning. (I Thessalonians 4:6)
- F. God has not called anyone to impurity; He has called the believers to purity. (I Thessalonians 4:7)
- G. One who violates God's mandate is violating God, not man. God has given to us His Holy Spirit to guide and direct our lives. (I Thessalonians 4:8)
- H. Paul declared that he did not need to instruct them concerning brotherly love because they had been divinely instructed to love one another. (I Thessalonians 4:9)
- I. Paul acknowledged that these believers were practicing brotherly love toward those in Macedonia. He encouraged them to continue to excel in their demonstration of love. (I Thessalonians 4:10)
- J. He instructs these believers to concentrate on their own work and to refrain from intruding into the affairs of others. He had previously instructed them about this very matter. (I Thessalonians 4:11)
- K. Paul tells the Thessalonian believers to live properly before the unbelievers and not to be deficient (fall short) in anything. (I Thessalonians 4:12)

- L. In this verse, Paul changed the subject and began to deal with the coming of the Lord. He did not want the Thessalonian believers to be ignorant of God's plan concerning those who had died, nor did he want them to be sad as though the living believers had no hope. (I Thessalonians 4:13)
- M. Paul declared that those who believe that Jesus died and rose again should also believe that those who have died in the Lord will also rise again. Jesus will take them to be with Him. (I Thessalonians 4:14)
- N. Paul exhorted the Thessalonian believers with the word of the Lord. He assured them that the believers who are still alive when Jesus returns will not go to be with Jesus before those who have died in the Lord. (I Thessalonians 4:15)
- O. The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the sound of the chief angel, and with the reverberation of God, at which time the dead believers will rise. (I Thessalonians 4:16)
- P. After the resurrection of the dead believers, the living believers will be caught away in the clouds with the dead believers to meet the Lord in the air. The believers will be with the Lord forever. (I Thessalonians 4:17)
- Q. The Thessalonian believers are exhorted to comfort one another with this truth. (I Thessalonians 4:18)

VI. CHAPTER FIVE

- A. Paul told the Thessalonian believers that they did not need for him to write about the time this event would occur. (I Thessalonians 5:1)
- B. These believers knew that the day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night. (I Thessalonians 5:2)
- C. When there is talk of peace and security, unexpected destruction will arrive like the labor pains of a pregnant woman. None will be able to escape. (I Thessalonians 5:3)
- D. Paul assured the Thessalonian believers that they were not in darkness; therefore, that day would not overtake them as a thief. (I Thessalonians 5:4)

- E. He called the Thessalonian believers children of light and children of the day, thereby confirming that they were not children of the night or darkness. (I Thessalonians 5:5)
- F. Because they are not children of the night, Paul warns these believers to remain awake, to be watchful, and to pay attention to the things that are taking place. (I Thessalonians 5:6)
- G. Sleep and drunkenness are generally associated with night, at which time people are more vulnerable. (I Thessalonians 5:7)
- H. Believers are associated with the day; therefore, we should be discreet and clothe ourselves with the breastplate of faith and love. Our helmet should be hope in our salvation (I Thessalonians 5:8)
- I. God has not appointed the believers to punishment; He has predetermined that we obtain salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who died for us. It does not matter whether we are dead or alive; the believers will live with the Lord. (I Thessalonians 5:9-10)
- J. Paul told the Thessalonian believers that because of this truth, they should continue to comfort and support one another. (I Thessalonians 5:11)
- K. He encouraged these believers to know those who labored among them and presided over them, admonishing them in the Lord. (I Thessalonians 5:12)
- L. According to Paul, these leaders should be highly regarded with love because of their works. (I Thessalonians 5:13)
- M. Paul also told the Thessalonian believers to be at peace with each other. (I Thessalonians 5:13)
- N. Paul instructed the Thessalonian believers to warn those who were insubordinate, to encourage those who were discouraged, to care for the weak, and to be patient with everyone. (I Thessalonians 5:14)
- O. These believers are told not to return evil for evil to anyone. They are told to pursue good, not only among themselves, but also for everyone. (I Thessalonians 5:15)

- P. Paul exhorted them to be cheerful at all times. (I Thessalonians 5:16)
- Q. He told them not to be negligent in prayer. (I Thessalonians 5:17)
- R. He exhorted these believers to be grateful in everything because gratitude is the will of God for those who are in Christ Jesus. (I Thessalonians 5:18)
- S. Paul gave the Thessalonian believers the following commands: “Do not quench the Spirit.” “Do not despise prophecy;” “Test everything;” “Retain the good;” and “Refrain from the view of all evil.” (I Thessalonians 5:19-22)
- T. Paul invoked this blessing on the Thessalonian believers: “The God of peace completely consecrate you so that you may be faultless in spirit, soul, and body until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He then told them to be watchful. (I Thessalonians 5:23)
- U. Paul assured the Thessalonian believers that He Who called them is faithful, and that He would honor his (Paul’s) request. (I Thessalonians 5:24)
- V. Paul asked the Thessalonian believers to pray for him and his companions. (I Thessalonians 5:25)
- W. He told them to greet the brethren with a holy kiss. (I Thessalonians 5:26)
- X. Paul gave the recipient of this letter a charge to read it to all the holy brethren. (I Thessalonians 5:27)
- Y. Paul concluded this letter with his familiar benediction--“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” (I Thessalonians 5:28)

VII. SUMMARY

- A. Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica faced great opposition. Because of the opposition, he left Thessalonica and went to Berea.
- B. The comment, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too,” refers to Paul and his companions, who were preaching the gospel of Jesus in Thessalonica.

- C. The letter to the Thessalonian believers states that it is from Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus.
- D. The Thessalonian believers were an example to all the believers in Macedonian and Achaia.
- E. Although the believers at Thessalonica had faced great persecution, they remained faithful.
- F. Paul instructed these believers to live their lives above reproach.
- G. To eliminate confusion concerning the believers who had died, Paul told what would occur with both the dead and the living believers when the Lord returned for them.
- H. Paul concluded his letter with explicit commands concerning the believers' conduct.

VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. This letter to the Thessalonian believers provides instructions and hope for believers today.
- B. We must live our lives in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord.
- C. We, too, are children of the day; therefore, we must be mindful of the times and seasons.
- D. It is certain that the Lord is coming back for the believers; therefore, we must be alert and wise, anticipating the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- E. Although we are unable to predict the day and hour of the Lord's return, we must be alert to the signs of the time.
- F. May we, too, be consecrated in spirit, soul, and body until the Lord returns.