



1 Thessalonians Bible Studies – Group Member Notes

Study 1 **Acts 13:1-5, 16:6–10 & 17:1–10**

Read Acts 13:1-5

1/ Who commissioned Paul for this task? Reflect on the various ways that God directed Paul to carry out this mission to the Gentiles.

Read Acts 16:6-10

2/ What prompted Paul to go to Thessalonica? What do we appreciate about our God from this encounter?

3/ Can you recall other times in the Bible when God used visions to achieve His purposes?

4/ Can you see any challenges today if people claim to be acting upon visions?

Read Acts 17:1-10

5/ If Paul's mission was to the Gentiles, why does Paul have a custom of going to the Jews first?

6/ Why does Paul use the Old Testament to prove who Jesus is and why Jesus has to suffer?

7/ Why do the Jews react so strongly if the Old Testament is so specific about the suffering of the Messiah? (c.f. Isaiah 52:13-53:12)

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8/ What hindered the Jews from accepting a crucified Messiah? (c.f. Deut 21:23)

9/ What are the reactions when the True Gospel is preached?

Note:

F.F. Bruce wrote: Militantism was spreading among the Jewish communities throughout the Roman Empire. It was about this time that the Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome because of their persistent rioting.

10/ Do you think it is likely that the claims by Paul's opponents are accurate? Why?

11/ Why would the Jewish leaders refer to Caesar and why does this reflect the trial of Jesus?

12/ Why do you think that Paul left so quietly? Is this a sign of weakness or disinterest? How could it be misunderstood?

Spend some time praying.

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Study 2 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Thessalonians was the most important and populace centre in Macedonia, Northern Greece. The letter clarifies the meaning of commitment to Jesus Christ for people who live amongst idolatry and immorality.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

- 1/ What can we appreciate from the first verse?

- 2/ What does the little word “in” mean to you?

- 3/ How would you describe the tone of the prayer in chapter 1?

- 4/ Why do you think Paul used such energetic words for the Christian journey?

- 5/ What does “always and continually mentioning” highlight for our prayers?

- 6/ John Calvin summarised the Christian faith as ‘Faith, Love and Hope’. Discuss if and why this is a helpful summary?

- 7/ Why does the displaying of ‘Faith, Love and Hope’ give reason to give thanks?

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- 8/ Verse 4 – “Chosen” does this encourage you? Why does this thought upset some Christians?
- 9/ What does Paul highlight about the conversion of the Thessalonians?
- 10/ Why doesn’t the word “Power” simply mean signs and wonders” Compare John 14 & 16
- 11/ Why is Paul excited that others are talking about the Thessalonians?
- 12/ What specific action did the Thessalonians have to do? Do we need to parallel this action in our lives?
- 13/ Is Paul simply concerned about having a successful ministry?

Spend some time praying – in thanks.

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Study 3 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

- 1/ Paul and his companions have been accused of not having the Thessalonians' best interest at heart, how does Paul refute this?

- 2/ Was it easy for Paul to present the Gospel? Do you think it is any easier now?

- 3/ Is Paul working simply for his own financial gain and popularity?

- 4/ How do the images of mother and father help us in how we share the Gospel?

- 5/ What is the significance of the 3 verbs: encourage, comfort and urge? (vv11-12)

- 6/ How would you describe 'living a life worthy of God'?

- 7/ How would you rebut the statement that 'Christianity is simply man-made tales'?

- 8/ Opposition constantly attempts to undermine faith, what is a GOOD way to display that your faith is genuine (such that you would not easily throw it away)?

Spend some time praying – for strength to stand firm in the face of opposition.

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Study 4 1 Thessalonians 2:17 – 3:13

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13

- 1/ In verse 17 Paul says “we were torn away from you”, literally, “orphaned” why does Paul use these words?

- 2/ Why does Paul consider that Satan blocked his way?

- 3/ Why does Paul put so much weight on the Thessalonians remaining faithful?

- 4/ How would you answer a fellow Christian who was disappointed or frustrated that they were being rejected for being a Christian?

- 5/ Unlike Paul, Timothy was free to travel. What is the purpose of his travels?

- 6/ How does Paul respond to Timothy’s news?

- 7/ Why isn’t Paul satisfied to leave them to themselves? (c.f. 2:17, 3:4, 5, 11)

- 8/ Why does Paul stress the urgency of prayer?

- 9/ Acknowledging the activity of Satan, how would you describe Paul’s confidence in his God to work and be the victor?

Spend some time praying – urgently!

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Study 5 **1 Thessalonians 4:1-12**

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

- 1/ Discuss: Is there any sense that we 'have arrived' in our Christian walk?

- 2/ Christianity is often reduced to simply man-made rules and demands. How does verse 2 add weight to the instructions that Christians are called to live by?

- 3/ Self-control is extremely difficult. Discuss what some areas that you consider to be a struggle for Christians today?

- 4/ Reflect on an aspect of self-control and the second great commandment? (vv3-8)

- 5/ How significant is the command to 'live a holy life' (be set-apart) for God? (c.f. 3:13 with 4:3-8)

- 6/ Why would Paul urge his readers to lead 'a quiet life'? (vv11-12)

- 7/ Give an example of "minding your own business " for the sake of the Gospel?

- 8/ What is an equivalent to 'work with your hands' today? (v11)

- 9/ Why is it important to gain respect of outsiders? (v12)

- 10/ Is the instruction to 'not be dependant' (v12) an absolute command? What happens if we take this focus on dependency too far?

Spend some time praying – perhaps in single sex groups.

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Study 6 **1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11**

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

1/ Do you find it intriguing that many people who don't want to have anything to do with God, will still want something good after death? Discuss.

2/ The technical term for Jesus' return is "Parousia". Although clearly taught throughout the New Testament there is only a small amount of detail given. Paul's letters to the Thessalonians contains the most description. What extra details would you like to know?

3/ Do we anticipate that Jesus will return before we die?

4/ Why do you think Paul uses the word "sleep" rather than "die"?

5/ What is the greatest proof that there is life after death?

6/ Why don't the millions of Christians who die prior to Jesus' return, miss out?

7/ What three important facts do we learn from 4:16?

8/ What does Paul want the Thessalonians to do? (4:17). Is this helpful for us to do?

9/ When will Christ Jesus return?

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10/ The phrase “The day of the Lord” (v2) occurs frequently in the Old Testament and refers to the vindication of the righteous. When it is used in New Testament it refers to Jesus’ second coming why do you think this is so?

11/ What are the characteristics of “The Day of the Lord”?

12/ How should the certainty of this day affect the way we live?

13/ Why do you think Paul uses warfare imagery?

Spend some time praying – perhaps for what is to come in Christ.

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Study 7 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

- 1/ Why do you think Paul has to give such strong words of encouragement?

- 2/ What is the significance of the phrase 'work hard among you' ('labour') in verse 12?

- 3/ List the different ways we should treat other people. Are some ways harder than others?

- 4/ What are three imperatives for the Christian to live by to be in accord with God's will in Christ? Discuss how this helps you?

- 5/ What does it mean to 'not quench the Spirit'? (v19)

- 6/ 'A prophecy' is a word from the Lord (c.f. Rev 19:10) – how do we test them?

- 7/ A Christian's confidence is in what? (vv. 23,24). What does this look like for you?

- 8/ Following Paul's example, what is the best thing we can do for our fellow Christians?

Spend some time praying – and perhaps close by saying the grace together.