

*Excerpt from*

# Strong Faith, Enduring Hope

A Study of 1&2 Thessalonians

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**Kristi Briggs Bible Studies**

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**Cover design: Gretchen Briggs**

# 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

## Week 2

### Commendable Christians

This week, we will take a peek into a church that is “doing church” right! The Thessalonians may be brand new believers, but they are on fire with the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul is thankful for their work, labor and endurance. They show evidence of their salvation in the power of the Holy Spirit at work through them. They have deep conviction. They have joy even in suffering. Because of this, they have become famous throughout Greece!

Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonian believers somewhere around A.D. 50. Jewish persecutors, like cockroaches, just keep popping up. They could not leave Paul alone, and they ran him and Silas out of town. So Paul wrote this letter from the city of Corinth in southern Greece a few months later.

But the people of the church are still in Thessalonica, and they are suffering persecution. In the middle of their suffering, their faith, love, hope and joy have become well-known everywhere. In fact, Paul singles them out as a model for other churches.

Apparently, suffering and persecution cannot steal our joy! If the Thessalonian church is a model for us to follow, then suffering and persecution might even make us a better church! We don’t see anywhere in Scripture that these were a breed of super-Christians. We can assume they were regular people--working jobs, raising families, struggling to pay their bills. But they received the Gospel of Christ (even though they were worshipping idols!), and it radically changed their lives.

One of the great attributes of God is His immutability—He does not change! The Holy Spirit that fired up and empowered the Thessalonians two millennia ago, is the very same Holy Spirit that dwells in believers today. You can trust this One True God with your suffering and struggles. He is the Source of faith, love, hope and joy.

#### Memory Verse

“For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.”  
1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

## Day 1: Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

1. **Paul has some important things he wants to talk to the Thessalonians about, but he begins his letter with thanksgiving. Who does Paul thank and how often?**

In the original Greek language, verses 2-10 is one long sentence written by Paul!

2. **For which of the believers is he thankful?**

"There is no reason to suppose that the Thessalonian church consisted of any less odd a collection of characters than the average congregation to-day."  
—William Neil, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians*

3. **For what three things is he specifically thankful in verse 3?**

4. **"Faith, love and hope" are mentioned frequently by Paul in his letters.**

**What did the church's faith produce?**

"Apart from the evidence of works, faith may be deemed **dead**. It is *not* the real thing. True faith continually contributes to spiritual growth and development."

—J. Ronald Blue, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

**What does James 2:26 say about faith and work?**

5. How has your faith in Jesus shown itself in your work/deeds?

6. What did the church's love produce?

7. Paul specifies "labor" in this verse, not "work." How would you describe the difference?

8. Labor is hard! When is a time your deep love for someone prompted you to *labor* for him/her?

"The stress in the word *labor* (*kopos*) is on the cost, exertion, fatigue, and exhaustion that it entails. Work (*ergon*) may be pleasant and stimulating but *labor* implies toil that is strenuous and sweat-producing. Had there been no *love* (*agape*) they would not have persisted in carrying on the hard and difficult activities now being performed."

—Hiebert, *1&2 Thessalonians*

**9. Finally, what did the Thessalonians' hope produce?**

**10. What does Romans 8:24-25 say about hope?**

**11. What are the Thessalonians hoping for? (see 1 Thessalonians 1:10)**

**12. All believers in Christ have this hope! How does this encourage you to have patience in light of the conditions of the world today?**

"The Thessalonians' unseen attitudes of faith, love, and hope were like hidden roots that produced the fruit of good works, loving labor, and patient endurance. How lush and fragrant these qualities were in Paul's memory now that he was so many miles away...In his heart he carried with him a bouquet of encouragement, gathered from his brief encounter with the Thessalonian believers."

-Swindoll, *Contagious Christianity*

Day 2: Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

**13. What does Paul know about his brothers and sisters in Christ in verse 4?**

**14. This is sometimes called the “doctrine of election.”**  
**Let’s look at a few other verses about God’s sovereign election/choice. What do these verses say in your own words?**

**Deuteronomy 7:6-8 (regarding his choice of the nation of Israel)**

**John 15:16**

**Ephesians 1:4-5**

**Colossians 3:12**

“Election protects us from thinking of salvation as depending on human whims, and roots it squarely in the will of God.”

–Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*

**15. According to 1 Thessalonians 1:5a, what is the evidence of God's choosing the Thessalonians?**

**16. What does Romans 1:16 say about the power of the Gospel?**

GOSPEL

Our word *gospel* comes from the Greek word *euangelion* which means "a good message."

We get the English word *evangelize* from this.

**17. What does John 16:7-8 say about the Holy Spirit's conviction?**

**18. 1 Thessalonians 1:6 gives further evidence of their salvation. How so?**



**19. The Thessalonian believers were imitating Paul, and therefore imitating Jesus. Paul lived with integrity! He preached the gospel wherever he went, but he also lived it. And so his life was worth imitating because he imitated Christ.**

**He wrote these words to the Corinthian church:**

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This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

1 Corinthians 4:1-4

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**How about you? As a believer, you represent Christ. Is your life worth imitating? Finish your time today talking to the Lord. Ask Him to reveal any inconsistencies. Ask Him to help you live with integrity.**

Day 3: Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

**20. We saw the evidence yesterday that the Thessalonians had been chosen by God, and therefore believed the Gospel. What does Paul say about their church in verse 7?**

"It was important, when the gospel was brought to people who had never heard it before, that those people should see Christianity in action—and where would they see it, if not in the conduct of those who brought it? The preachers were conscious of this responsibility, and paid special attention to the 'ways in Christ' (1 Cor 4:17) for the sake of those whom they were evangelizing."

—F.F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*

Greece was divided into two provinces—Macedonia in the north, and Achaia in the south. Paul wrote this letter from Corinth (in Achaia) to Thessalonica (in Macedonia).

**21. The church followed Paul's example in living for Christ, but soon became the example to the world around them! Verse 8 says their faith in God has become known everywhere.**

**This will require some imagination, but what do you think this group of believers was like? What did they do that made their faith so contagious? How did they treat each other and those outside of their group?**

"As Paul moved through Macedonia, where Thessalonica was located, and Achaia, where Corinth was located, he would start to proclaim the gospel, then stop short in amazement. Still echoing down the canyons and through the streets was the word of the Lord spoken by the Thessalonian believers. Their Christianity was contagious and spreading faster than Paul could travel."

—Swindoll, *Contagious Christianity*

**22. What do these verses say about the church/body of Christ?**

**Romans 12:4-5**

**1 Corinthians 12:12-14**

**Hebrews 10:24-25**

**23. God does not intend His followers to live in isolation. He created the church to live and worship in community. Paul commended the faith of the Thessalonian church as a whole, not the individuals. They worked together for the spread of the Gospel!**

**How do you think the gifts God has given you could be used for your church?**

**24. Pray now that God would use your local church for the spread of the Gospel. Ask God to use your gifts to build up the Body of Christ.**

Day 4: Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

**25. What report is Paul receiving from people everywhere about the Thessalonians? (see verses 9-10)**

"Salvation does not begin with giving up something but with receiving Someone."

—Hiebert, *1&2 Thessalonians*

**26. What happened first in their hearts—turning to God or leaving the idols?**

"You do not leave your idols for some reason and painfully try to find God. What happens is that you discover something of the beauty, the glory, and the greatness of God; and, seeing that and wanting it, you are willing to forsake the cheap and tawdry things you once believed could satisfy."

—Ray Stedman, *Waiting for the Second Coming*

**27. What does Romans 5:6-8 say in your own words?**

**28. How have you believed the lie that we have to "clean ourselves up" before we can become a Christian? Is there someone you know who needs to hear the Gospel, but you feel they are just "too far gone"?**

**29. The other report Paul is receiving is that the Thessalonians are waiting for Jesus. This is an expectant waiting, like “waiting up” for your teenager to come home at night!**

**Believers in Christ have been waiting for Jesus’ return for many years. What do these verses say about His return?**

**Acts 1:9-11**

**Revelation 1:7-8**

**30. What does Paul say God did for His Son in 1 Thessalonians 1:10?**

**31. Look again at Acts 1. This time read verses 1-11. In these verses, Luke is describing Jesus’ life after His death and resurrection. What are some of the things Jesus said and did?**

## **FAITH & HOPE**

We know Jesus is the object of our FAITH. In Thessalonians, we see that He is also the object of our HOPE!

**32. Was Jesus alive or dead when He ascended into heaven in verse 9?**

We serve a LIVING God! He is eternal and immortal! Just as Jesus ascended as the Living God into heaven, He will return one day!

**33. All five chapters of 1 Thessalonians end with a reference to Jesus' second coming! Paul reminded them of this again and again to encourage them. Why do you think they needed this encouragement? (see 1 Thessalonians 1:6)**

**34. Are you "waiting up" for Jesus' return? How would your life look differently if you lived it with the continual hope and expectation of Jesus?**

**35. When does Jesus say He is coming according to Revelation 22:20?**

## **REVELATION 22:20**

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

**36. Spend some time in prayer, meditation on Scripture and journaling. Jesus' return is a source of incredible hope for the follower of Christ. Ask God to give you excitement and expectation. Ask God to prepare you for Christ's return and to show you people in your life who need to hear about Christ's salvation before His return.**

Day 5: Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

**37. What does the very last phrase of verse 10 say Jesus does for us?**

**38. Wrath is not a fun subject to talk about, but let's learn about what this wrath is. First, who will receive God's wrath according to these verses?**

**John 3:36**

**Romans 1:18**

**Ephesians 5:5-6**

**39. What happens on the day of God's wrath?**

**Isaiah 13:6-13 (called the Day of the Lord)**

**Jeremiah 30:5-7**

## **GOD'S WRATH**

"The fact of God's wrath against sin is declared in both the Old and New Testaments. His wrath against sin arises out of the holiness of His nature...As the moral ruler of the universe, God must be totally opposed to sin and evil in every form. The concept of divine wrath roots in the fact of God's nature as holy and the nature of sin as rebellion against God. Without the truth of divine wrath the universe would sink into moral chaos."  
—Hiebert, *1&2 Thessalonians*



**Romans 2:5**

**Revelation 6:12-17**

**Revelation 14:9-10**

**Revelation 19:15**

*"Therefore there is now no  
condemnation for those who  
are in Christ Jesus."*

*Romans 8:1*

**40. Look again at 1 Thessalonians 1:10. It says Jesus  
"rescues us *from* the coming wrath." What do you  
think that means?**

**41. We know God watches over His people. Finish your study this week praising God from Psalm 91 below.**

**Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.  
I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust."  
Surely he will save you  
from the fowler's snare  
and from the deadly pestilence.  
He will cover you with his feathers,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.  
You will not fear the terror of night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,  
nor the plague that destroys at midday.  
A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.  
You will only observe with your eyes  
and see the punishment of the wicked.  
If you say, "The Lord is my refuge,"  
and you make the Most High your dwelling,  
no harm will overtake you,  
no disaster will come near your tent.  
For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways;  
they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.  
You will tread on the lion and the cobra;  
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.  
"Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him;  
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.  
He will call on me, and I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble,  
I will deliver him and honor him.  
With long life I will satisfy him  
and show him my salvation."**

Day 6: Put this week's Memory Verse in your heart

For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

**This is the first letter of each word. Write the verse below using the first letters as an aide. After you have written the verse once or twice, say it out loud until you are comfortable with it.**

**F w k b a s l b G t H h c y b o g c t y n s w w b a w p w t H S a d c**

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