

Living *through* Persecution

My Study of Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians

Name: _____

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This study guide has been put together by Dr. Gary McCall in 2014 for the use of members of Bible Center Church in individual, Sunday school, and small group studies of Paul's epistles called 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

The text included in the study guide is the NET Bible which is free to use in ministry. More details about it along with study helps can be found at www.bible.org.

Greetings and Background

(1 Thessalonians 1:1)

The Scripture *(NET Bible)*

From Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace and peace to you!

1 Thessalonians 1:1

From Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:1

Your Study

1. What can you discover about the city of Thessalonica?

2. Looking at *Acts 17:1-15*, what do you learn about Paul's experiences there?

These two epistles are both very short. Take some time to read them through in their entirety in one sitting. You can take notes on the following charts.

3. On one of your readings, list all the persons or entities mentioned in these two epistles.
4. On another reading record the themes you discover?

1 Thessalonians 1-3

<i>1:1</i>	<i>1:2-10</i>	<i>2:1-16</i>	<i>2:17-20</i>	<i>3:1-5</i>	<i>3:6-13</i>

Themes

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People

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1 Thessalonians 4-5

<i>4:1-8</i>	<i>4:9-12</i>	<i>4:13-18</i>	<i>5:1-11</i>	<i>5:12-22</i>	<i>5:23-28</i>

Themes

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People

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2 Thessalonians 1-3

<i>1:1-2</i>	<i>1:3-12</i>	<i>2:1-12</i>	<i>2:13-17</i>	<i>3:1-5</i>	<i>3:6-15</i>	<i>3:16-18</i>

Themes

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People

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The Background of the Thessalonian Epistles

These two epistles are among the earliest of Paul's writings. It is believed that they were written sometime after he left Thessalonica and Berea, probably from Corinth, perhaps in 50 AD. A likely order of the writing of Paul's letters is:

Date Range AD	Book	Place
40-49	Galatians	Antioch, Syria
50-54	1 & 2 Thessalonians	Corinth
56	1 Corinthians	Ephesus
56	2 Corinthians	Macedonia
57	Romans	Corinth
60	Ephesians	Rome
60-61	Philippians	Rome
60-62	Colossians & Philemon	Rome
63-66	1 Timothy	Macedonia?
63-66	Titus	Macedonia?
67	2 Timothy	Rome ¹

We are not sure which one of the epistles to the Thessalonians was written first. The longer letter has been called *First Thessalonians* and the shorter letter *Second Thessalonians*, but this does not mean that they were written in that order.

What was at issue in Thessalonica?

Paul and Silas had been forced to leave the city after a little over three weeks work due to the "peace" bond (bail) which Jason and others in the church had posted assuring that there would be no more trouble (*Acts 17:5-9*). Timothy had been left behind (*17:10*). He apparently rejoined them in Berea, but Paul had to flee from there to go to Athens where he left word that they join him in Corinth (*17:13-15; 18:1*).

Dr. Thomas Constable summarizes Paul's teachings in 1 Thessalonians:

Specifically, the Holy Spirit led Paul to pen this inspired epistle in order to meet several needs. He encouraged his children in the faith to persevere despite their *persecution*. He refuted *false charges* made by the local enemies of the gospel: that the missionaries had preached in order to fatten their wallets and gain other personal benefits; that Paul had left Thessalonica hurriedly and had not returned because he was a coward and a hypocrite. Paul also wrote to correct some *errors* that had cropped up in the church: an inclination to moral laxity and laziness, and a tendency not to respect the church's spiritual leaders. Paul gave *instruction* too on the subject of what would happen to Christians who would die before the Lord's return.²

¹ Adapted from *Bible Knowledge Commentary NT*, p. 434

² Thomas L. Constable, "1 Thessalonians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: NT*, p. 689.

Why Study Thessalonians?

Since these are some of the earliest writings of Paul, it gives us a chance to see what doctrines were important to him from the very beginning and then to trace the development of those teachings in later epistles. One thing which stands out most clearly is that the *last days* (eschatology) was very important to his work since he was only in Thessalonica a little over three weeks. Hendricksen comments,

It is a well-known fact that *in I Thessalonians every chapter ends with a reference to the second coming*. See 1:10; 2:19,20; 3:11-13; 4:13-18; 5:23,24. Also II Thessalonians abounds in eschatological material; see especially 1:7-10 and 2:1-12. For information on such subjects as “the rapture” (in whatever sense one conceives of it), the time of Christ’s return, the great apostasy or “falling away,” “the man of sin,” “the one who (or: that which) restrains” “the mystery of lawlessness,” and “the manifestation of his (Christ’s) coming” – we naturally turn first of all to I and/or II Thessalonians.³

These letters also give us great insight into the *psychology* of the Apostle Paul and into his *missionary approach* as the head of a team.

The Structure of the Epistles

Five times Paul uses the word *epistle* to describe these two letters. Once at the end of 1 Thessalonians (5:27) and the rest in the shorter letter of 2 Thessalonians (2:2, 15; 3:14, 17). What is an *epistle* and what makes it a particular type of literature?

An *epistle* is a particular way of writing a *letter* that the New Testament authors adapted for their communications to the widely scattered churches. Greek and Roman models for epistles follow this structure:

1. Introduction
 - a. the name of the sender,
 - b. the addressee(s)
 - c. “Greetings”
2. Body
3. Conclusion
 - a. Final wishes
 - b. Specific greetings

New Testament authors modified and added to this structure:

1. Introduction
 - a. the name of the sender,
 - b. the addressee(s)
 - c. “Grace and peace to you ... ”
2. Body
 - a. Thanksgiving and Prayer

³ William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 4

- b. Paragraphs on the Topic (Doctrinal)
 - c. *Paranesis* which is a list of moral exhortations, etc.
3. Conclusion
- a. Final wishes
 - b. Specific greetings⁴

Knowing this description, and using the notes from your study, how would you outline:

<i>1 Thessalonians</i>	and	<i>2 Thessalonians</i>
I. Introduction		I. Introduction
II. Body		II. Body
III. Conclusion		III. Conclusion

⁴ Based upon *Dictionary of Biblical Images*. Ryken, Wihoit, and Longman, "Epistle" p. 243

Salvation and Waiting on the Lord

(1 Thessalonians 1:2-10)

The Scripture *(NET Bible)*

^{1:2} We thank God always for all of you as we mention you constantly in our prayers, ^{1:3} because we recall in the presence of our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ^{1:4} We know, brothers and sistersⁱ loved by God, that he has chosen you, ^{1:5} in that our gospel did not come to you merely in words, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (surely you recall the character we displayed when we came among you to help you).

^{1:6} And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, when you received the message with joy that comes from the Holy Spirit, despite great affliction. ^{1:7} As a result you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ^{1:8} For from you the message of the Lord has echoed forth not just in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place reports of your faith in God have spread, so that we do not need to say anything. ^{1:9} For people everywhere report how you welcomed us and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God ^{1:10} and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath.

ⁱthe Greek word ἀδελφοί is masculine plural, 'brothers,' but may be used for all believers, i.e., 'brothers and sisters' as the NET Bible typically translates.

Your Study

1. For what about the Thessalonian believers does Paul thank God? *(1:1-3)*

2. What characterized Paul's preaching in Thessalonica? *(1:4-5)*

3. What does character have to do with the Gospel? *(1:5)*

4. Who enables believers to rejoice in affliction? *(1:6-7)*

5. What did all Macedonian and Achaia know about their conversion? *(1:8-10)*

6. Were they familiar with the teaching of Christ's Second Coming?

7. Often Paul's thanksgiving and prayers give us our first clues as to the issues that are going to be addressed in the body of his epistles. Based on your reading of *1 Thessalonians* and particularly 1:2-10, what problems were there in that church?

8. What questions do you have from your reading of *1 Thessalonians 1:2-10*?

Structural Layout

Scripture is put together as all writing is with a structure. The largest unit of that structure is that of a paragraph. Your chart on pages 3-5 give the most likely paragraphs of these two epistles. We want to encourage you to study the structure within each of these paragraphs.

Here is an example of how the structure of verse 1 can be represented recognizing key grammatical structural elements such as *prepositions (from, to, of, in)*, and *connective words (and, but, so)*. Also I have attempted to align lists together and phrases under what they modify.

1:1	¹ From Paul and Silvanus and Timothy,	} List of Names
Senders		
Addressees	to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	} Modifying the church
Greeting	Grace and peace to you!	

The charts on the following two pages are for you to write down the two paragraphs of the thanksgiving section (1:2-5, 6-10) taking note of *prepositions, connectives,*

1:2	
3	
4	
5	

1:6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Serving

(1 Thessalonians 2:1-16)

The Scripture (NET Bible)

^{2:1}For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, about our coming to you—it has not proven to be purposeless. ²But although we suffered earlier and were mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of much opposition. ³For the appeal we make does not come from error or impurity or with deceit, ⁴but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we declare it, not to please people but God, who examines our hearts. ⁵For we never appeared with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is our witness—⁶nor to seek glory from people, either from you or from others,⁷although we could have imposed our weight as apostles of Christ; instead we became little children among you. Like a nursing mother caring for her own children,⁸with such affection for you we were happy to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

⁹For you recall, brothers and sisters, our toil and drudgery: By working night and day so as not to impose a burden on any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.¹⁰You are witnesses, and so is God, as to how holy and righteous and blameless our conduct was toward you who believe. ¹¹As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his own children,¹²exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you live in a way worthy of God who calls you to his own kingdom and his glory.

¹³And so we too constantly thank God that when you received God’s message that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human message, but as it truly is, God’s message, which is at work among you who believe.¹⁴For you became imitators, brothers and sisters, of God’s churches in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, because you too suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they in fact did from the Jews,¹⁵who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and persecuted us severely. They are displeasing to God and are opposed to all people,¹⁶because they hinder us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. Thus they constantly fill up their measure of sins, but wrath has come upon them completely.

Your Study

1. What kind of shape were Paul and Silas in when they arrived in Thessalonica?

How did that effect their preaching? (1-2)

2. What things characterized their evangelism in Thessalonica? (3-12)

3. Why is it important that the Bible be accepted as from God not men? (13-14)

4. Why were the Judeans due wrath from God? (15-16)

5. What questions do you have from your reading of *1 Thessalonians 2:1-16*?

Structural Layout

For this exercise, first use the printed Scripture on page 13 and double underline all the verbs before you attempt to fill out the chart. Verbs are key to the action in a passage and are a great help in lining up things related to that action under the verb.

Another help will be to find the prepositions and their objects and put a parenthesis (around them).

Put a box around the connective words to identify them. Again, use the NET Bible as your text for this exercise. This will enable us to compare what we have done and so learn better how to analyze the structure of a passage.

Once you have done this, then feel free to consult other versions or commentaries.

2:1

2

3

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11

12

13

14

15

16

Dealing with Anxiety

(1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13)

Do you ever feel anxious about things which are beyond your control? It might help you to know that Paul often felt the same way. This lesson helps us focus on one such incident in the life of the church at Thessalonica.

The Scripture (NET Bible)

^{2:17}But when we were separated from you, brothers and sisters, for a short time (in presence, not in affection) we became all the more fervent in our great desire to see you in person.¹⁸For we wanted to come to you (I, Paul, in fact tried again and again)ⁱ but Satan thwarted us.¹⁹For who is our hope or joy or crown to boast of before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not of course you?²⁰For you are our glory and joy!

^{3:1}So when we could bear it no longer, we decided to stay on in Athens alone. ²We sent Timothy, our brother and fellow worker for God in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen you and encourage you about your faith, ³so that no one would be shaken by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. ⁴For in fact when we were with you, we were telling you in advance that we would suffer affliction, and so it has happened, as you well know. ⁵So when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter somehow tempted you and our toil had proven useless.

⁶But now Timothy has come to us from you and given us the good news of your faith and love and that you always think of us with affection and long to see us just as we also long to see you! ⁷So in all our distress and affliction, we were reassured about you, brothers and sisters, through your faith. ⁸For now we are alive again, if you stand firm in the Lord. ⁹For how can we thank God enough for you, for all the joy we feel because of you before our God? ¹⁰We pray earnestly night and day to see you in person and make up what may be lacking in your faith.

^{3:11}Now may God our Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. ¹²And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we do for you, ¹³so that your hearts are strengthened in holiness to be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

ⁱThe literal expression is “once or twice” which is frequently used as an idiom referring to an indefinite low number, but more than once, i.e., “several times”

Structural Layout

Continue to layout the NET Bible looking for verbs, prepositions, and connective words. But also take note of patterns that you see in words or expressions.

2:17
18
19
20
3:1
2
3
4
5

6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13

Study Questions

1. How long was Paul separated from the Thessalonians, and why couldn't he return?
2. In what way were they Paul's hope, joy, and crown of boasting?
3. When would this joy come to fulfillment?
4. What were Paul's concerns about the Thessalonians?
5. Why do Christians suffer affliction? (3:3-5)
6. What can we learn about handling *anxiety* from this passage?
7. What questions do you have from your reading of *1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13*?

Living Holy

(1 Thessalonians 4:1-12)

The Scripture *(NET Bible)*

^{4:1}Finally then, brothers and sisters, we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received instruction from us about how you must live and please God (as you are in fact living) that you do so more and more. ²For you know what commands we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³For this is God’s will: that you become holy, that you keep away from sexual immorality, ⁴that each of you know how to possess his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God. ⁶In this matter no one should violate the rights of his brother or take advantage of him, because the Lord is the avenger in all these cases, as we also told you earlier and warned you solemnly. ⁷For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. ⁸Consequently the one who rejects this is not rejecting human authority but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

^{4:9}Now on the topic of brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. ¹⁰And indeed you are practicing it toward all the brothers and sisters in all of Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, ¹¹to aspire to lead a quiet life, to attend to your own business, and to work with your hands, as we commanded you. ¹²In this way you will live a decent life before outsiders and not be in need.

Introduction

There is a discernable difference in Paul’s style beginning in chapter four. He has moved on from talking about the teams’ ministry and relationship with the Thessalonians. While he doesn’t repeat their questions, it does seem that he is giving them instructions about some areas of concern. Perhaps Timothy had communicated some issues which he had observed them struggling with in his recent visit (3:1-6).

In chapters 4 and 5, Paul gives them practical instruction in Christian living (4:1-12), in the “Rapture” (4:13-18), about being ready for the Day of the Lord (5:1-11), and some keys to getting along in the church (5:12-24).

While doing this lesson, we want you to focus upon the practical Bible study skill of asking questions of the text. You don’t have to answer them right now, just ask them. We will be searching for the answers in our group study together.

The chart on the next page will help you organize your questions.

Your Study

A very helpful study technique is as you read a passage the first time before analyzing it, write down the questions that pop into your mind about it. Ask the six study questions as you read.

This chart is arranged like a sheet of notebook paper to show one way to arrange your questions. Many of the basic questions about the Thessalonians have been answered in your previous study. Look instead for things which indicate particular problems they were having or the issues that Paul was dealing with.

It is suggested that you try reading through looking for all the “Who” questions you can ask, then on the second reading, the “What” questions, and so forth.

Ref	The Questions: <i>Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?</i>
4:1	
4:2	
4:3	
4:4	
4:5	
4:6	

4:7	
4:8	
4:9	
4:10	
4:11	
4:12	

Possible Structural Layout of 4:1-8 and 4:9-12

Words in brackets [] are inferred from the context.

¹ Finally then, brothers and sisters,
we ask you
and urge you
in the Lord Jesus,
that as
you received instruction
from us
about how you must live
and [about how you must] please God
(as you are in fact living)
that
you do so more and more.

² For you know what commands we gave you
through the Lord Jesus.

³ For this is God's will:
that you become holy,
that you keep away from sexual immorality,

⁴ that each of you know how
to possess his own body in holiness
and honor,

⁵ not in lustful passion
like the Gentiles
who do not know God.

⁶ in this matter
no one should violate the rights of his brother
or take advantage of him,
because
the Lord is the avenger
in all these cases,
as we also told you earlier
and [as we also] warned you solemnly.

⁷ For God did not call us to impurity
but {God did call us} in holiness.

⁸ Consequently
the one who rejects this is not rejecting human authority
but [rejecting] God,
who gives his Holy Spirit
to you.

⁹ Now on the topic of brotherly love
 you have no need for anyone to write you,
 for
 you yourselves are taught
 by God
 to love one another.
¹⁰ and indeed
 you are practicing it
 toward all the brothers and sisters
 in all of Macedonia.
 but
 we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more,
¹¹ to aspire to lead a quiet life,
 to attend to your own business,
 and to work with your hands,
 as we commanded you.
¹² in this way
 you will live a decent life
 before outsiders
 and [you will] not be in need.

Some Observations

There are no imperatives (commands, orders) in these verses. Paul does use three verbs to urge them about what they *should do* (subjunctives, underlined):

4:1 Finally then, brothers and sisters, we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received instruction from us about how you must live and please God (as you are in fact living) that you do so more and more. [... that you should do so more and more]

4:12 In this way you will live a decent life before outsiders and not be in need. [... you should live a decent life ... and no one should have need.]

He only uses three participles in these verses, 4:5, “do not know God” and 4:8, “the one who rejects ... who gives ...” By contrast, he uses the infinitive form “*to be or not to be*” 14 times in seven verses. This serves to get his point across by setting a goal without giving commands to these 4:people. What does he want them to be? I have translated using the more formal expression of the infinitive ... to ...

- 4:1 to live (literally, walk] and to please God
- 4:3 to keep away
- 4:4 to know ... to possess
- 4:6 to not violate the rights ... to not take advantage
- 4:9 no need to write ... to love one another
- 4:10 to do so more
- 4:11 to aspire to lead ... to attend ... to work

Translation of the Church

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

The Scripture (NET Bible)

^{4:13} Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep as Christians. ¹⁵ For we tell you this by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be suddenly caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Your Questions

Before we begin to study this passage, I would like for you to take the time to write down any questions you would like answered about death and dying. We may not get answers to all of these in Thessalonians, but we can build a future study related to what the Scriptures teach about this.

Thanks for taking the time to do this. Your leader will be writing these down and we will try to get answers for as many as we can. Now on to this great passage!

Study Questions

1. Based on your reading of these verses, *what do you think* was the big issue troubling the Thessalonian believers? *(4:13-18)*

2. What was the *designed use* of these verses? *(4:18)*

Structural Layout of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

In the right hand column, copy out these verses putting them in the structural form that helps you see the various ideas that Paul is using to equip them to comfort one another.

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Use the left hand column to write down a word or two which describes what is on the corresponding line.

The following is taken from *The Lexham Clausal Outlines of the Greek New Testament* and is supplied here as an example of how to study structure. The translation is an English literal one which reflects the original, but doesn't always make for good understanding. It is similar the the "back translation" that a translator would do in going from say, *Palawano*, back into *English*.

	An English Literal Back-Translation
<i>main verb</i>	¹³ not want now
<i>complementary infinitive</i>	you to be ignorant brothers
<i>attributive genitive participle</i>	concerning those who have fallen asleep,
<i>purpose</i>	so that not grieve
<i>comparative clause</i>	as also the rest
<i>att. gen. ptcp/ appositive</i>	- no who have hope
<i>logical conditional sentence</i>	¹⁴ if for we believe
<i>indirect statement</i>	that Jesus died
<i>2nd verb ὄτι</i>	and rose
<i>main verb</i>	thus also - God those who have fallen asleep through - Jesus <u>will bring together</u> with him
<i>att. gen. ptcp/ direct object</i>	
<i>main verb</i>	¹⁵ this for to you we say by the word of the Lord
<i>appositive ὄτι</i>	that we
<i>att. gen. ptcp.</i>	- who are alive
<i>att. gen. ptcp.</i>	- who remain until the coming - Lord's
<i>emphatic future negation ὄτι</i>	not possibly precede those who have fallen asleep,
<i>att. gen. ptcp/ d.o.</i>	
<i>causal + prepositional phrase</i>	¹⁶ for himself the Lord with a shout of command
<i>2nd prep. pbr.</i>	with the voice of the archangel
<i>3rd prep. pbr.</i>	and with the trumpet of God
<i>1st verb ὄτι</i>	will descend from heaven
<i>2nd verb ὄτι</i>	and the dead in Christ will rise first
<i>att. gen. ptcp/ subject</i>	¹⁷ then we - who are alive
<i>att. gen. ptcp/ subject</i>	- who remain
<i>main verb/ prep. pbr.</i>	at the same time together with them will be snatched away
<i>prep. pbr</i>	in the clouds
<i>main verb</i>	for a meeting with the Lord
<i>prep. pbr</i>	in the air
<i>prep. pbr</i>	and thus always together with the Lord we will be
<i>verb</i>	¹⁸ therefore comfort one another with - words these ⁵
<i>imperative</i>	

About now you are probably feeling better about your structural outline! It is likely simpler and easier to understand than this one. The point is to make it your own and then strive to make it as accurate and reflective of what is being said as possible.

⁵Dean Deppe, *The Lexham Clausal Outlines of the Greek New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2006), 1 Th 4:13–18.

The Day of the Lord

(1 Thessalonians 5:1-11)

Paul moves on to this related topic from the previous passage, “How will we know when the day of the Lord is about to come?” Many people with a Christian background would like a good answer so they can wait to get ready for that day after they have had their fun. He gives the best response in 5:1-11.

The Scripture (NET Bible)

^{5:1} Now on the topic of times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you. ² For you know quite well that the day of the Lord will come in the same way as a thief in the night. ³ Now when they are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will surely not escape. ⁴ But you, brothers and sisters, are not in the darkness for the day to overtake you like a thief would. ⁵ For you all are sons of the light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness. ⁶ So then we must not sleep as the rest, but must stay alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we are of the day, we must stay sober *by putting on the breastplate* of faith and love and as *a helmet* our hope *for salvation*. ⁹ For God did not destine us for wrath but for gaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that whether we are alert or asleep we will come to life together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, just as you are in fact doing.

Your Study

1. What is “*the day of the Lord?*” (5:2; consider the following references)

Amos 5:18-20

Joel 1:15

Zephaniah 1:7

2 Peter 3:10-12

2. Who are the “they” in 5:3?

What do “they” think about the day of the Lord?

3. In what way is the coming of the day like the coming of a thief in the night? (5:2)
4. In what way is the coming of the day like labor pains coming upon a pregnant woman? (5:3)
5. How does Paul describe the two approaches to the day of the Lord? (5:4-10)

Unbelievers	Believers

6. How do we prepare for the day of the Lord? (5:8)
7. What is our destiny? (5:9-10)
8. What is the other destiny? (5:9)
9. How can we use this truth to encourage and build up others? (5:11)

Structural Layout of 5:1-11

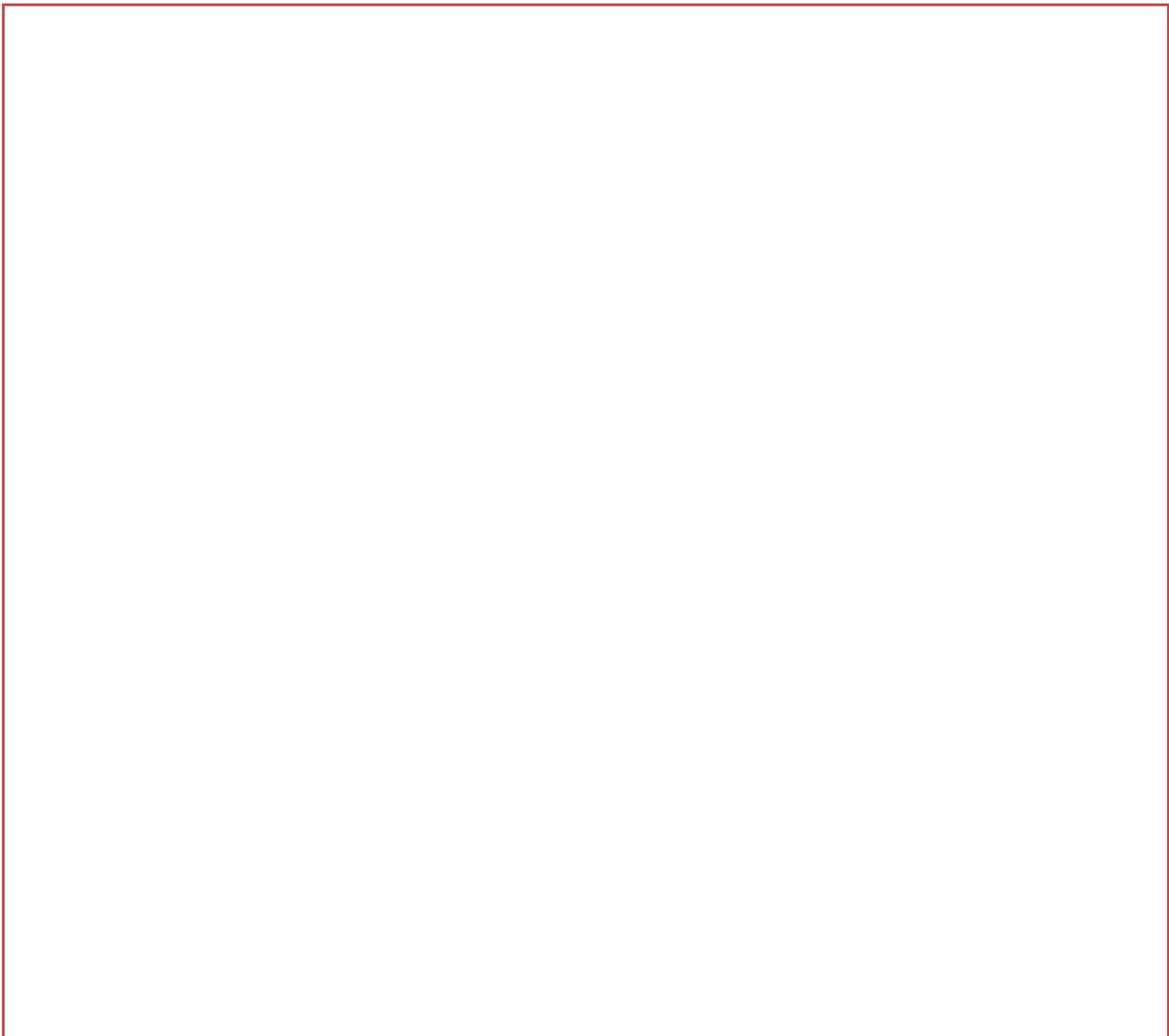
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4. What does Paul say is the natural trend of hurting people? (5:15)

5. What further instruction on God's will does Paul give? (5:16-18; compare 4:3)

6. What admonition does Paul give them regarding prophecy? (5:19-22)

Structural Layout of 5:12-22



Structural Layout of 5:23-28



Ending Questions (5:23-28)

7. In what way is God the God of peace? (5:23)

8. What work does God do in all believers? (5:23-24)

9. Why would Paul ask them to pray for the team? (5:25)

10. What is this greeting with a holy kiss? (5:26)

11. How would most people have found out about this letter? (5:27)

12. Compare this closing with Paul's opening comments (1:1 and 5:23, 28).