

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS
1 & 2
THESSALONIANS



Building Foundations 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Study Guide

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Progression Toward Maturity

Phase 1: *Relationship with God* (Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:9)

- The Call of God Is First to Himself.
- Foundation for Salvation (“Creation to Christ”)

Phase 2: *Position with Christ* (1 Corinthians 1:30a)

- We Become a New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Foundation for Salvation (“Positioned in Christ” and “New Birth Explained”)

Phase 3: *Dependence upon the Spirit* (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13-14)
- Church Is the Pillar and Foundation of Truth (1 Timothy 3:15)
- Acts/Building Foundations

Phase 4: *Practical Sanctification—Identification with Christ, Co-crucified with Christ, Conformed to Image of Christ* (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:28-29)

- Romans to Revelation/Building Foundations
- Principles of Spiritual Growth
- God’s Masterpiece—The Cross
- Looking unto Jesus Lessons

Conclusion: *Recommended Order of Study*

Detailed Explanation of Each Phase

Phase 1: Foundation for Salvation (“Creation to Christ”)

The Christian life is a relationship; therefore, our desire is to lead our readers into a deep and intimate relationship with God. In order to grow into that level of relationship with God, there are foundational truths that must be clearly taught and understood. These foundational truths include the following:

- The attributes of God – His love, power, grace, omniscience, omnipotence, justice, immutability, hatred of sin, faithfulness.
- The sinfulness of man, his helplessness to save himself, and his need for a Savior.
- Only God can provide a way of salvation.
- The Gospel

Phase 2: Foundation for Sanctification ("Positioned in Christ" and "The New Birth Explained")

The moment someone is born again, there is an immediate change of position that takes place in his or her life. At that very moment, one becomes a child of God, and is taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. All that Christ is and all that Christ has become ours. Therefore, before service to God is considered, one must be grounded in an understanding of who we are in Christ. Some important foundational truths that should be emphasized in Phase 2 teaching include the following:

- Placed into Christ
- Justified (declared righteous) and accepted in Christ
- Child of God
- Restored to oneness with God
- Eternally secure in Christ
- His Divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through His finished work on the cross.
- Our part is to believe.

Phase 3: Dependence upon the Spirit and Introduction of the Church ("Acts/Building Foundations")

The position change that takes place in every believer's life at salvation is immediate and complete. The daily "living out" of that position, on the other hand, is a growth process. It is the progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is working all believers

through in His process of conforming us to the image of Christ.

In order for believers to move on to maturity, we must learn to walk and depend upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our purpose in Phase 3 teaching is to reveal the Holy Spirit's ministry and His faithfulness to lead, guide, feed, and protect God's children, as well as to introduce the church. Some of the important foundational truths that should be emphasized include the following:

- The Holy Spirit's ministry to lead, guide, feed, protect, and establish us in truth
- To emphasize the FAITHFULNESS of the Spirit to fulfill all that Jesus promised
- To reveal the early church's dependence upon the Spirit
- The Holy Spirit is as faithful in our lives today, as He was to the early church in the book of Acts.
- Introduction of the church and her role

Phase 4: Practical Sanctification–Identification with Christ; Conformed to the image of Christ (“Romans to Revelation/Building Foundations”), “Principles of Spiritual Growth,” God’s Masterpiece the Cross of Christ,” and “Looking Unto Jesus” lessons)

The Holy Spirit is teaching us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, with Christ becoming more and more the object of our hearts.

In Phase 4, we will study through the epistles with the purpose of learning to rest in our identification with Christ and His finished work. As we, by faith, begin to appropriate identification truths, our co-crucifixion with Christ, our lives will become more and more conformed to the image of Christ, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

Some of the important truths that will be emphasized in Phase 4 include the following:

- The believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (crucified with Him and raised to newness of life)
- Sanctification is the process of walking less and less in the flesh and more and more in the Spirit.
- Our part in the process is faith in the finished work of Christ and our identification with it.
- What it means to truly walk in the Spirit
- Putting off the old and putting on the new
- Manifesting the life of Christ/fruit of the Spirit

Conclusion: Recommended Order of Study

Because there truly is a progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is taking all believers through, our Bible lessons have been developed and arranged to line up with that work of the Spirit in our lives. Each set of lessons contains the foundational truths that must be in place in a person's heart in order to facilitate their growth onto the next stage of spiritual growth. Therefore, we believe that it is important to teach the lessons in the following order:

- ***God's Eternal Plan***
- ***Building Foundations Order of Study:***

Acts	2 Corinthians
Romans	Philippians
Ephesians	Philemon
1 Corinthians	2 Timothy
1 Timothy	1 and 2 Peter
Titus	1, 2 and 3 John
1 and 2 Thessalonians	Hebrews
Revelation	James
Galatians	Jude
Colossians	
- ***Knowing God*** before the ***Digging Deeper*** studies
- ***Digging Deeper*** studies in any order

1 THESSALONIANS

LESSON 1

A. Introduction

- This is the letter that Paul sent to the church in Thessalonica. Paul first visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey.
- While visiting there, Paul was accompanied by Timothy and Silas.
- On Paul's first journey, Barnabas and Mark were his companions.
- During that first journey when they were in Perga, Mark left Paul and Barnabas and returned to Jerusalem.
- Because Mark had deserted them, this displeased Paul. When he and Barnabas were planning their second trip, Barnabas wanted to take Mark along, but Paul disagreed.
- They had such a disagreement that Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways; Barnabas took Mark, and Paul chose Silas who was a leader in the Jerusalem church (**Acts 15:36-41**).
- On Paul's second journey, he and Silas were put in prison at Philippi; after they were released, it was then that they went to Thessalonica.

Read Acts 17:1-4.

- In Thessalonica, there were a number of people who came to Christ. However, there were more who rejected the message and even began to persecute the Christians.
- After leaving these new believers, Paul was concerned about their spiritual wellbeing as well as the persecution.

- Therefore, Paul sent Timothy on to Thessalonica to see how they were doing and to encourage them.
- Paul and Silas then moved on from Athens to Corinth. After a time, Timothy brought back the news that the Thessalonian believers were doing well.
- After receiving the good news, Paul wrote this letter.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2.

- As mentioned before, Paul and Silas had evangelized the city of Thessalonica. And now Paul is writing to the church (the “called-out ones”) of the Thessalonians “which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.” This refers to the fact that they were a community of believers who were positioned in Christ and also abiding in Christ. They were a group united by their faith, set apart from a sinful world, and because of their co-crucifixion with Christ, were eager to live out their Christianity despite persecution and an immoral culture.
- “Grace be unto you and peace.” Grace and peace only comes from God, through Jesus Christ.
- Though these believers had already received God’s grace and peace at salvation, Paul wanted them to continue to experience, realize, and grow in it. This would happen as their knowledge of Christ increased (**2 Peter 3:18**).
- Paul said that he continually thanked God for them. With receiving severe persecution and very little teaching, the fact that they remained steadfast in their faith was a direct result of God’s grace.
- Paul knew that God was their only hope and he depended upon God to strengthen and establish them.

B. Paul Encourages the Believers

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:3.

- The Thessalonian believers had stood firm during persecution (1:6; 3:1-4, 7-8), and Paul was commending them for their “work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope.”
- Paul points out first their “work of faith.”
- Their faith in Christ was producing works.
- A man’s work is proof of his faith. Our beliefs produce actions.

Read James 2:14-18.

- The next evidence that Paul points out is their “labor of love...” Faith works and love labors.
- Love is a part of the fruit of the Spirit and because they were genuinely saved and walking in the Spirit, their love was “laboring” (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**).
- Paul now mentions their “patience of hope.” Faith works, love labors, and hope gives patience.
- The Thessalonians were convinced of their hope in Christ, that they were saved from their sin and judgment, that they were made blameless before God, and that Christ was coming back for them.
- Therefore, in spite of all their persecutions, they patiently rested in Him and remained steadfast in their faith.
- As we are all involved in encouraging and discipling others, this is an important point to remember. We must always point people to Christ (**Isaiah 26:3**).
- When Jesus had told His disciples that He was going to be arrested and crucified, they were discouraged by it.
- However, He encouraged them with the fact that He would send them a Comforter who would never leave

them and that He would one day return for them
(**John 14:1-3**).

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5.

- Paul begins verse 4 by encouraging the Thessalonians to remember that they did not choose God—He chose them.
- When Paul preached the gospel to the Thessalonians, the Holy Spirit convinced them that His message was the truth; they believed it and were saved.
- The same will be true for us as well. We cannot force people to believe anything. Our trust must not be in our own wisdom or great speaking ability but solely in the Holy Spirit to convince hearts of truth.
- Only the Holy Spirit can convince someone of their sinfulness (**Romans 1:16**) and need to trust in Christ as their Savior. This is what Jesus promised He would do (**John 16:8-11**).
- We conclude that the gospel is not just a lot of words; it comes with power to save; it comes with an indwelling Holy Spirit, and it comes with great assurance that we will spend eternity with Christ. Paul is saying, “This is evident if you watch my life.”

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:6.

- The Holy Spirit had so convinced the Thessalonians of the truth that even though they were being greatly persecuted, they joyfully believed the Word and became followers of Paul and of Christ (**1 Corinthians 11:1**).
- This is something to consider if we lead someone to Christ. It is important for us to be walking in the Spirit so others will become followers of Christ as we follow Christ.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:7-8.

- Paul, Silas, and Timothy were men who walked in the Spirit. As the Thessalonians followed their example, they, too, became believers who walked in the Spirit.
- The result was that they became a testimony and example to other churches.
- The Thessalonians' steadfastness in the midst of persecution became a true testimony of their faith to many other believers.
- These Thessalonian believers had a world-wide reputation and were an example to other churches. So well-known was their faith that Paul did not need to speak of it to others, as they were already talking about it.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10.

- Paul wanted to remind them of how completely the gospel had changed their lives.
- The Holy Spirit had so convinced them of the truth that the Thessalonians turned to God from their idols to serve God and to wait for the return of His Son.

I THESSALONIANS

LESSON 2

A. Walk To Please God

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2.

- Paul wrote that he wanted the Thessalonian believers to walk and please God in the way that they had been taught as well as to grow in it more and more.
- How can any believer walk in a way that is pleasing to God? By walking in faith (**Hebrews 11:6**).
- The flesh is at enmity with God and as long as a man is walking in the flesh, in unbelief, it is impossible for him to please God.
- In verse 2, Paul gives a reason for their need to walk by faith; so that they would continue to abound more and more into Christ-likeness (**Galatians 4:19**).

B. Be Sanctified

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5.

- The phrase, “for this is the will of God, even your sanctification,” actually means, “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified or Holy.” Becoming holy is actually the process of sanctification. This process continues throughout every believer’s lifetime on earth in preparation for heaven.
- Therefore, we could say that God’s will for all believers is that we be sanctified and live holy and set-apart lives, not living in fornication or other sin, but that each person should know how to live a holy, sanctified life in honor and not in the lusts of the flesh.
- This can only be done through the Spirit (**Romans 6:11-14**).

- Walking in the Spirit is done by faith and begins with believing in our co-crucifixion with Christ.
- As we, by faith, appropriate this fact, we will begin to experience daily freedom from the reign of our flesh (**Galatians 5:16**).
- As the Spirit teaches us to by faith appropriate our co-crucifixion with Christ, He will then lead us on to appropriating the fact that we have also been given a new nature and that we are now a new creation in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). Our part is to believe.
- As the Holy Spirit gives us the power and desire to appropriate these truths by faith, the result will be that our hearts will become increasingly more occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ, and the more we are occupied with Him, the more like Him we will become (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).
- This is the will of God for every believer.

C. Do Not Deceive

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:6-8.

- Paul writes that we are to be careful not to deceive or defraud our brothers in Christ, for God will not let us go undisciplined. God is faithful; He is the avenger (**Romans 12:19**).
- God has not called us to uncleanness. He has not called us to live a carnal life, indulging in our fleshly desires. We have been called to live holy lives through the knowledge of Him (**2 Peter 1:3**).
- Paul makes it very clear that whoever rejects this God-given teaching and deceives and defrauds his brothers in Christ is rejecting God Himself.

D. Brotherly Love

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10.

- Paul said he did not have to teach the Thessalonian believers to love and be concerned for one another. God was already teaching them that.
- Love is part of the fruit of the Spirit. As we walk in the Spirit, the Spirit teaches us to love and care for one another.
- Paul said they had shown love toward the believers in Macedonia, but he goes on to say that they should increase still more in this area of love.
- There will never be a limit to the amount of love that people need, but the love that we show will be limited by our spiritual condition.
- The more carnal we are, the less we will love; but the more we walk in the Spirit, the more Christ's love will flow through us.

E. Be Content

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.

- The NIV translates verse 11 in this way: ***“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your hands.”*** Apparently, some of the Thessalonian Christians had adopted a lifestyle of idleness, depending on others to provide for their physical needs. The reason for this idleness is unknown; however, because a discussion of the second coming follows this section, these people may have come to the conclusion that since Christ could come back at any moment, they would just sit and wait.
- The purpose for Paul's statement to lead a quiet life, mind your own business, and work with your hands could be to encourage the believers in Thessalonica to be a good testimony to the unbelievers.

- When we walk in the flesh, unbelievers will see no difference between our lives and theirs. It is when we walk in the Spirit and the Spirit manifests the life of Christ in and through us that they will see something desirous in our lives.
- When we are walking by faith, Paul says we will lack nothing. The Spirit will give us the power and desire to do His good pleasure (**Philippians 2:13**). Also, He will give us a contentment in our hearts for whatever situation the Lord has us in, as if we don't have any needs (**Philippians 4:11-12**).
- It is when we are in the flesh that our hearts are never satisfied and we continue to lust and desire for more.
- A very wealthy man was asked how much money would make him satisfied. He answered, "Just one more dollar."

1 THESSALONIANS

LESSON 3

A. The Resurrection of the Dead in Christ

- It appears as though some Thessalonians believed that only those Christians who were alive when Christ returned would be taken up with Him.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

- Apparently, some believers had died in the church and the rest were mourning and sorrowful as if these brothers and sisters would not be resurrected.
- If a believer close to us dies, we will be sad, but we have great hope that one day we will be together again in heaven.
- In the flesh, our focus will be on ourselves, that we miss that person; but in the Spirit, we will be excited for them, that they are in heaven and that one day we will all be together with Him.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

- Remember **1 Corinthians 1:30a**—we have been placed into Christ; whatever happens to Jesus, happens to us.
- He died; we died positionally. He arose and we have also positionally risen and are currently seated at the right hand of the Father, in Christ. However, we will also be physically raised one day and receive a new heavenly body.
- In verse 14, Paul makes very clear that God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.
- When a believer dies, his soul and spirit is separated from his body; however, when Jesus returns, the soul and spirit of those who have already died will be

returning with Jesus and their bodies will be resurrected, re-created, and be united with their soul and spirit.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

- Paul begins by making clear that this is God's Word; this is the way God has revealed it will happen.
- Because it is God who said it will happen this way, we can believe it and be absolutely confident that God will do what He said.
- Notice also Paul said the Lord Jesus Himself will be coming back for us.
- This reveals the loving care He has for His children. He could send someone else to pick us up and bring us to Him, but He is coming Himself.
- When the call is sounded, only His children will hear it and respond. The unsaved will not hear and will not respond.
- Paul said those believers who have already died will rise first, and then we who are still alive will go up with them to meet the Lord Jesus in the clouds.
- "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."
- There is nothing more exciting than to know that one day we will be with the Lord Jesus Christ forever.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:18.

- What Paul mentions in this verse is another aspect of the "hope" that is ours in Christ.
- It is with this hope we have in Christ that Paul says we should be comforting one another.
- As we walk in the Spirit, our focus will be on Christ who is our hope.
- In the flesh, we will place our hope in other things rather than in Christ.

I THESSALONIANS

LESSON 4

A. Warning of God's Coming Judgment

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2.

- The phrase, “day of the Lord,” refers to a future time when God will bring both punishment and blessing.
- Paul said that the Thessalonians already understood that the “day of the Lord” would come like a thief in the night and at a time when no one expects it.
- The “day of the Lord” is not just one day, but it is a period of time.
- This time will begin after Jesus comes to take His children out of the world, and it will end when God destroys all things and creates a new heaven and a new earth.
- As we continue to study, we will learn more about what is going to take place during this time.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

- The Day of the Lord is going to come as a total surprise to the “unbelieving” world.
- The days of Noah are a good example of what it will be like.
- The people refused to believe God's warnings. They continued doing whatever they wanted, feeling safe and happy. But when God decided that it was time, down came the rain and the people were surprised.
- Sodom and Gomorrah is another example. The people had no idea what God was about to do; they spent their time living in pleasure and immorality.
- Lot even tried to warn his sons-in-law, but they only laughed at him. They did not believe.

- But, one day the fire came down, and they were surprised.
- Here in verse 3, Paul says that when the “Day of the Lord” comes, the people of this world will have a similar attitude.
- They will think that everything is safe and peaceful.
- But one day, the Church will be taken out of the world, and sudden destruction will prevail.
- Paul likens it to the suddenness of labor pains for a woman who is about to give birth to her child.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5.

- Paul said that we as believers are not in “darkness.” We are not ignorant of truth.
- We have the truth of God’s Word; we know what God says will happen. When the “Day of the Lord” comes, we will not be surprised like the unbelieving world.
- Was Noah surprised by the flood? No. He was warned by God and he believed God.
- Was Lot surprised? No. He, too, was warned and was led out of the city.
- Just like Noah and Lot, we, too, know and believe God; we won’t be surprised, either.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:6-7.

- What if a person was warned that a thief was coming in the night to break into his house, but this man began to drink until he was drunk and then fell into a deep sleep?
- Would we think that he is wise? Of course not.
- As we walk in the flesh, we are like that man. We won’t take the coming of the Lord seriously and will be like men who are in the darkness and are surprised by His coming.

- But in the Spirit, we will be sober-minded and vigilant, looking for and greatly anticipating our Lord's return.
- We will also have a concern for the unsaved and will have a burden for their souls and will warn them of the coming day.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11.

- People who belong to the day, who are living in the light of God have a whole different reason for living.
- Paul is saying that those who are sober-minded and alert have put on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation.
- Faith and love are part of the fruit of the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit and we will walk in faith and love; our heart will be assured of our salvation from God's wrath.
- Paul said we have not been chosen to receive wrath but to be saved by Jesus Christ who died for us.
- Therefore, as a believer, when the Lord Jesus returns, it doesn't matter whether we have died physically or not; all believers will be saved from the wrath to come and will live together with Jesus forever.
- Before God sent the flood, He first made sure that Noah and his family would be safe from the judgment, and He did that by locking them inside the ark.
- Before God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, He first had His angels lead Lot and his daughters out of the city.
- Before God judges the world, He will first take His church out of the world to save us from the judgment.

- Therefore, since we are assured of so great a salvation, we should be comforting one another.
- This world is a fallen, depraved and sin-cursed world that is very difficult to live in.
- The Word teaches us that things will get worse, but the day is coming when our gentle and loving Savior will come back and take us out of this sorrow and sin to be with Him forever.

I THESSALONIANS

LESSON 5

- In most of Paul's letters, he begins by reminding people of their position in Christ and that they are now a new creation in Christ with a new nature.
- Then, because of that fact, he goes on to describe what kind of living is worthy of their new nature.
- This is the way we should be teaching people. First, we teach them who they are in Christ, then to walk in the Spirit, and finally how to live the Christian life.

A. Elders

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.

- Paul writes that we are to recognize and esteem those elders who are laboring among us, to respect and appreciate them.
- We must keep in mind that the position of elder is a position God has given to certain men in the church to be the protectors and spiritual overseers of the church.
- They are men who are walking in the Spirit and are leading others to do so.
- Paul states we are to respect the elders who are over us "in the Lord."
- They are men who teach and labor among you by the will of God.
- Elders do not control the church according to their own wisdom. God is holding them accountable to lead and teach according to the truth of His Word.
- Paul makes it very clear it is the elder's responsibility to admonish us.
- This means they teach, train, exhort, encourage, comfort, and rebuke those in the church in an effort

to lead them into truth and teach them how to walk in the Spirit (**Hebrews 13:7**).

- Having taught believers to view elders with respect and honor, Paul now states that “Christians are to be at peace among yourselves.”
- How is it possible to be at peace with one another? By walking in the Spirit, for peace is part of the fruit of the Spirit.
- **Galatians 5:19-21** teaches that disunity and division is the work of the flesh. Walk in the flesh and disunity will characterize our church. However, the Spirit produces peace and unity (**Romans 12:10; 16-18; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-3**).

B. An Exhortation

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

- Paul writes a warning to the unruly who walk continuously in the flesh. These carnal Christians need to be warned and exhorted to go back to the cross, reckon their flesh as dead, and be restored to a deep abiding relationship with Christ.
- Notice that Paul is not just addressing church leaders but rather all believers.
- Anyone who sees a brother living in the flesh should consider **Galatians 6:1**.
- Next, Paul writes to “comfort the feeble-minded.”
- The feeble-minded are those who are discouraged or depressed. They are people who have lost sight of the greatness of God and the riches that are theirs in Christ and are focusing on the problems and difficulties of life (**Psalms 42**).

- In comforting them, we must remind them of the goodness of God (**Romans 2:4**) and turn their attention back to Christ.
- Paul also said to “support the weak.”
- The weak are those whose faith is not strong and they are easily tempted to walk in unbelief.
- In the flesh, our tendency will be to judge and criticize these people, but through the Spirit, we will be able to love, have compassion, and desire to see them strengthened.
- Paul now makes the comment, “be patient toward all men.”
- Again, patience is part of the fruit of the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit and we will be patient with people.
- However, if we walk in the flesh, our tendency will be to look down on and criticize those who become discouraged easily.
- We will consider those who are weak to be inferior. Keep in mind that the best the flesh can ever produce is self-righteousness.
- Just as God is patient with us when we fail over and over, as the Holy Spirit reproduces the life of Christ in us, we will be able to have the same patience toward others.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:15.

- When someone hurts or offends us, our carnal desire will be to retaliate, get revenge; but this is not God’s desire for His children.
- God’s desire is that we go back to **Romans 6:6**; believe that the flesh has been crucified with Christ and that we are free from its reign. Then the Spirit will take control of our soul (mind, will, emotions), and control our behavior toward others.

- In the Spirit, we will find the power and desire to love and have compassion for those who offend us.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22.

- Paul's comment to "*rejoice always*" has a deeper meaning than to just be happy on a good day. It is easy to be happy and joyful when our circumstances are good. Even unbelievers are happy when they get their own way.
- But what about when we are having a bad day or bad season of life? If we find that we are joyful when things go well but lose that joy when things go wrong, then we are walking in the flesh and are being controlled by our circumstances, rather than the Spirit (**Ephesians 5:20**).
- Joy is part of the fruit of the Spirit. When we are walking in the Spirit, we will experience joy regardless of our circumstances (**Acts 16:22-25**).
- In the flesh, our joy is based on the things of the world, but in the Spirit our joy is based on our relationship with and position in Christ (**Romans 8:35-39**).
- Next, Paul mentions, "*pray without ceasing*" (**Romans 8:28-29**).
- Prayer is an outflow of our dependence upon God, and we will depend upon God to the degree that we know Him.
- However, in the flesh our focus will be on ourselves and our dependence will be on other things or people (**Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20**).
- Paul goes on to say, "*in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God.*" Here Paul says, "In everything give thanks." In **Ephesians 5:20**, he says "*give thanks for all things.*"

- To the degree that we know God, we will rest in His goodness to work all things out for our good and His glory (**Romans 8:28-29**).
- As we are convinced of His great goodness toward us, we won't doubt or become discouraged in hard times, but rather we will be confident God will use it to mold us into His image.
- In the flesh, we want our own will and doubt His goodness to us (**Jeremiah 29:11**).
- Next, Paul writes, "***Do not quench the Spirit.***"
- To quench the Spirit is to suppress or stifle His influence and work in our lives.
- How can we suppress the Spirit's influence in our lives? By walking in the flesh.
- Rather than depending upon the Spirit to teach, lead and guide us into truth, in the flesh we lean on our own understanding to discern truth. The result is we come to wrong understandings and end up with misplaced faith.
- Paul goes on to say, "***do not despise prophecies.***"
- When Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, the Church did not yet have the completed Word of God. At that time the Holy Spirit gifted certain people to prophesy regarding truth.
- To disregard someone whom the Holy Spirit was using to communicate truth would be to "quench" the Spirit and His desire to reveal truth.
- Today, we could make a similar statement. Though the Spirit is not gifting people to prophesy, He is still gifting people to know and teach truth. To reject them is to "quench" the Spirit's desire to lead us into truth.
- Next, Paul says to "***test all things; hold fast to what is good.***"
- Before the Church had the completed Word of God, God used prophets to proclaim truth. During that time, there also were those who claimed to be

prophets of God, but were not teaching truth. Paul states that the Christians in Thessalonica were to test everything and cling to that which is true.

- It's the same for us today. There are those who are genuinely teaching truth, and there are false teachers (**2 Peter 2:1-3**).
- It is important that we walk in the Spirit and compare all teaching to the Word of God. If someone's teaching is not according to the truth written in God's Word, we should disregard it.
- If we walk in the flesh, then we are easily deceived by false teaching.
- Paul also said to "abstain from all appearance of evil."
- Not only is it God's will that we stay away from evil, but He also desires that we stay away from the appearance of evil.
- Only by God's grace will we have the power and desire to abstain from all appearance of evil.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

- The word, "sanctified" means to be set apart for God's possession and use.
- Positionally, we were sanctified at salvation, but conditionally the Holy Spirit is working out our sanctification in our daily lives.
- He's teaching us to walk in the Spirit so that our condition lines up more with our position.
- One of the key ingredients that the Spirit uses in our lives to make us Christ-like is hardship and difficulties.
- We will not become Christ-like until we walk in complete dependence upon the Spirit; and we won't walk in dependence upon the Spirit until we are convinced that we can't depend upon ourselves. It's hardship and struggles that reveal to us that we cannot depend upon ourselves.

2 THESSALONIANS

LESSON 1

A. Introduction

- It has been said that Paul wrote this letter from Corinth while on his second missionary journey.

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:1.

- Silas and Timothy were with Paul when he wrote this letter to the Thessalonians. It's interesting to note that Paul mentions this church as being "*in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" They were positioned in Christ and abiding in Christ.

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:2.

- Paul always started his letters with a greeting of grace and peace (**Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; etc.**).
- He writes often that Christians will experience hardship and difficulties, and he wanted them to remember that grace and peace is from God and can only be experienced by walking in the Spirit. If we walk in the flesh, we will not experience God's grace and peace.

B. Encouragement

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4.

- Even when writing to the carnal Corinthian church that was walking in the flesh, Paul began by pointing out things that would be an encouragement to them (**1 Corinthians 1:4-10**).

- So again Paul commends the Thessalonians for their faith, love, and patient endurance in suffering.
- He also mentions that their trust and dependence upon the Lord was growing more and more and that their love for one another was increasing.
- This is the promise God made through Paul in **Romans 8:28-29**. He promises to turn all things in our lives into good.
- The Thessalonians were experiencing suffering and persecution; but rather than becoming discouraged and turning away from God, their dependence upon God was increasing as was their love for one another.
- We need our needs. Had the Thessalonians not been in a difficult situation, they would not have been forced to depend on the Lord, nor would they have increased in faith.
- The same thing is true in our lives. As hardships come, by God's grace our dependence upon God and love for others will increase.
- However, if we are walking in the flesh, we will become discouraged and question God rather than trust, rest and depend on Him.
- Paul went on to say that in other churches, they gloried about the testimony of the Thessalonians because they were a great example of how God uses hardship to strengthen faith and dependence upon Him (**Romans 5:1-5**).
- Therefore, Paul was continually holding them up as an example to the other churches.
- We can do the same thing. As we have opportunity to teach others, we can use as an example those who are walking in the Spirit.

C. Persecution Used to Strengthen Faith

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:5.

- Paul said that the way the Thessalonians were growing spiritually was proof that God had done the right thing in allowing them to suffer so much.
- Because the Thessalonian believers desired to live godly in Christ Jesus, they were persecuted (**2 Timothy 3:12**).
- But God used this persecution to strengthen their faith in Him and to teach them to walk in the Spirit.
- The more they depended upon God and walked in the Spirit, the more the fruit of the Spirit would be manifested through them and the more Christ-like they would become.
- It is God's goal for all believers to be conformed into the image of Christ (**Romans 8:29**).
- This process of conforming us to the image of Christ is one that begins at salvation and will go on (**2 Corinthians 3:18**) throughout our lives.
- As we understand this process and the time element, it will enable us to lovingly tolerate others who fail and are being conformed into Christ-likeness.
- In the flesh, we become very critical of those who are struggling spiritually; we often think that they should know better.
- But in the Spirit, there will be understanding that even struggling and walking in the flesh is used by God to accomplish His will in His children's lives.
- Because God is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving and perfectly faithful, we can be at rest regarding our lives and the lives of those around us (**2 Corinthians 5:16a**).

D. The Almighty Judge

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

- Even though God was using this persecution for good in the lives of the believers, it did not mean that He would overlook those who were persecuting His children.
- God the Father, through Paul, promises that those who were persecuting the believers in Thessalonica would one day be punished.
- The first time Jesus came to earth, He came to be Savior of all; however, the next time He comes, He will be coming as the Almighty Judge who will judge and punish all who have refused to believe the gospel.
- This return of Jesus is not the rapture when Jesus will come back for His children.
- When He returns for His children at the rapture, those who have already “died in Christ” will go up to meet Him in the clouds but will not come all the way to the earth.
- However, one day Christ will be coming with His mighty angels, as well as with all the saints, and will actually come all the way to the earth.
- In verse 10, Paul writes that at this time when the Lord Jesus returns with His Church, all who believe will realize how great and wonderful He is and will praise and worship Him.

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12.

- It is because of the goodness of God that He is doing this work of conforming His children into the image of Christ (**Hebrews 13:20-21**).

- Therefore, Paul said that he prays always for God to continue this process so that our lives might be filled more and more with the life of Christ (**Romans 8:28-29**).
- The more of the life of Christ that is seen in the lives of His children, the more that Christ is glorified.
- This is the work of the Holy Spirit: (1) to point us to Christ, (2) to fill us with Christ, (3) to glorify Christ.
- Paul writes that Christ will be glorified, Because we are in Him, we, too, will be glorified in Him. It's all because of the grace of God.
- Originally, we were sinners, enemies of God who were deserving of eternal condemnation in hell and separated from God forever (**Ephesians 2:11-12**).
- From that hopeless situation, God by His love and grace, saved us, made us His child, clothed us with His righteousness, made us joint-heirs with Jesus, acceptable in His sight, fit for heaven, and partakers of the glory of His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that is grace! (**Ephesians 1:3-7**).

2 THESSALONIANS

LESSON 2

A. False Teaching

- In Chapter 2 we learn Paul's reason for writing 2 Thessalonians so soon after writing 1 Thessalonians.
- It appears the Thessalonians were being deceived by false teaching.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2.

- From our study in 1 Thessalonians, we learned all that would happen after the rapture.
- There will be seven years of God's wrath and judgment which will be poured out on those who refuse to believe the gospel.
- Because the Thessalonians were receiving such persecution and hardship, they were led to believe that the rapture had already taken place and that they were now experiencing the tribulation.
- This confusion of the truth was of great concern.
- In verse 2, Paul told them not to be troubled by thinking that the tribulation had already begun and that they had missed the rapture. He then mentions evidence of the tribulation.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

- Paul first mentions that before this time of judgment, there will be a turning away from the Lord.
- Paul was evidently speaking of the Church because the unbelieving world is already turned away from Him.

- By saying that the Church will turn away from God, it seems clear it is truth that will be denied and therefore facilitate the apostasy.
- Many believe the truth that will be denied by the Church during this time is that of the gospel as well as spiritual growth truths.
- In 1 Thessalonians Paul said, “quench not the Spirit.”
- By rejecting the truth of Romans 6 as the basis for our sanctification and attempting to live out the Christian life in the flesh and by our own strength, the Spirit is quenched; ultimately, God is turned away from (**Jeremiah 17:5-6**).
- Next, Paul writes that another indication of the tribulation period is that the “man of sin” will be revealed.
- When we study the book of Revelation, we will learn more about this person.
- He is the one who will rise to power and all the world will accept him and come under his authority and leadership.
- Satan will give him power to deceive and rule the world.
- Satan knows that one day Jesus is coming back to take His place as God’s appointed leader over the world; Satan wants to hinder God’s plan and will appoint his man to be the world’s leader.
- In Revelation, we will see that this man is called, “the one who is against Christ” or “the antichrist” (**Revelation 13:1-8**).
- Notice again in verse 3 that this man is called, “the man of sin.”
- Because he will be under Satan’s control, he will live in rebellion to God and will lead the world contrary to God’s Word.
- He is also called the “son of perdition” because he is as good as judged.

- God's plan is to one day re-create heaven and earth and establish Christ as its leader.
- For this man to try to work contrary to God's Word and will is to seal his own doom and destruction.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

- The antichrist has his root and origin in Satan who originally tried to take the place of God (**Isaiah 14:12-14**).
- Notice that Paul says he will exalt himself above God and establish that people worship him.
- During this period of time, the Bible teaches that the Jews will have rebuilt the temple. Paul said this man will sit in the temple of God to be worshipped as God.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:5-6.

- Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he had already taught them these things when he was with them.
- False teachers had come and they had become confused (**2 Peter 2:1-2**).
- In verse 6, Paul mentions that they also knew what was keeping Satan from carrying out his plan of establishing the antichrist as the ruler of the world.
- It is the Holy Spirit who is restraining Satan.
- God will not permit this to happen until He takes His children out of the world. Once He takes us out and the Holy Spirit is no longer indwelling His children on earth, the antichrist will be established and will have free reign to kill, mutilate, and destroy.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:7.

- Paul states that the present existence of evil in the world is a mystery. The mystery is the hidden principle of rebellion against authority—basically an inward desire to do wrong.
- The deeper the world goes into sin, the worse it gets and the greater the consequences. The world is bringing about its own judgment.
- Evil and wickedness are present according to the will of God, but the day is coming when God will remove His Church and the Holy Spirit from this earth. He will no longer restrain wickedness but will allow it to worsen even more.
- Once the Church and the Holy Spirit are taken out of the world, the book of Revelation teaches that God will allow Satan and the antichrist to reign for seven years.
- This time period is called the Tribulation. After that time, we read in 2 Thessalonians that Christ, His mighty angels, and His Church will return again to judge and punish the unbelieving world.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

- The words of the Lord are almighty (**Psalm 29:4**). With His words He created the heavens and the earth and now with His words this wicked man will be consumed (**Revelation 19:21**).
- At the command of the Lord, he will be removed from this earth and cast into hell forever.
- Paul also said that he will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming.
- The brightness of Christ's holiness and purity will destroy the antichrist.
- Remember what happened to Paul on the road to Emmaus when the brightness of the Lord shown around him? He fell down as dead (**Acts 9:1-4**).

- There are those today who talk as if Satan and his demons are powerful and they are able to wage a war against God and His angels and that we believers really need to be praying so that God's will won't be hindered by Satan.
- Keep in mind that God has not created something He cannot control.
- Satan has power to do only that which God in His sovereignty allows for the carrying out of God's own purposes (**Acts 4:26-28**).
- When God says it is time, Christ will return and the antichrist and Satan's plan will be totally destroyed by the brightness of His holiness and the power of His words.
- A man is a fool to ever think that Satan can hinder God's will.

B. The Antichrist Comes Into Power

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.

- Paul is stating how the antichrist will come into power.
- He will work just as Satan does. He will have power to do signs and miracles and through lies and deceit will deceive the world into following him.
- Verse 10 reveals the real reason why he will be able to deceive the world—the world will have already rejected the love of the truth that they might be saved.
- Because these people reject truth, God will allow them to be blinded to truth during the antichrist's reign and be deceived into following him and condemned with him.
- Paul said that because they have already rejected the truth of the gospel, they will be deceived by the antichrist's miracles and lies.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.

- Paul wanted the Thessalonians to be encouraged by the fact that as God's children, He has something totally different in store for them.
- The world is going to be deceived and condemned; but from the very beginning of creation, God has chosen His children through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and belief of the truth.
- It is through the Spirit's work of convincing our hearts of the truth that we come to believe in that truth and are sanctified by it.
- God has called His children through the gospel to partake of the glory of Christ, not to be judged and condemned with the unbelieving world (**1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**).

C. Conclusion

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:15-17.

- Paul concludes that since God's plan for His children is one of salvation, hope, and grace, the Thessalonians can confidently remain firm in the truth they had already been taught. (**John 8:32**).
- For the Thessalonians to continue worrying and doubting what will take place in the future is to walk in unbelief. As we walk in unbelief, we lose the ability to discern truth (**Ephesians 4:17-18**).
- As we are deceived by false teaching, we begin to worry about things that would be of no concern for us if we knew the truth.
- Paul prays, *"Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work."*

- How will God do this in our lives? Through leading us into truth and a deep abiding relationship with and in Christ.
- In order for God's love and everlasting consolation to comfort and establish us, we must first know Him.
- As the Spirit reveals more of Him, we will believe more and be comforted and established in Him.
- This is a work of the Spirit; we can in no way make it happen apart from His will and work.
- In all things this, too, is a work of the Spirit; we cannot make it happen ourselves apart from His orchestration.



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