

Sunday School Member Quarterly

Summer 2024

1 & 2 Thessalonians

Jesus is Coming Back!

Sunday School Lessons for Adults and Youth

Written by John O. Yates



Morningside

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Sunday School – 9:00 each Sunday Morning

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Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are taken
from the King James Version of the Bible.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Sunday School Lessons

June through August 2024

1 & 2 Thessalonians

Jesus is Coming Back!

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Daily Bible Reading Guide

Read the following scripture passages each day and complete the learning activities in this book each week. This will prepare you for Sunday School class, and God will bless you as you read, study, and memorize His Word.

Week of May 27 – June 1

Mon: 1 Thessalonians 1; **Tues:** Acts 15:36 – 16:15;
Wed: Acts 16:16-40; **Thurs:** Memorize 1 Thess. 1:9-10;
Fri: Acts 17:1-15; **Sat:** 1 Thessalonians 1

Week of June 3 – 8

Mon: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; **Tues:** Acts 5:17-32;
Wed: 1 Corinthians 4; **Thurs:** Romans 1:1-17;
Fri: 2 Thessalonians 3; **Sat:** 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Week of June 10 – 15

Mon: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20; **Tues:** Romans 10;
Wed: 1 Peter 1; **Thurs:** Memorize Philippians 1:6;
Fri: 1 Peter 2; **Sat:** 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

Week of June 17 – 22

Mon: 1 Thessalonians 3; **Tues:** Acts 17:1-15;
Wed: 2 Timothy 1; **Thurs:** Memorize 1 Thessalonians 3:12;
Fri: Colossians 1; **Sat:** 1 Thessalonians 3

Week of June 24 – 29

Mon: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; **Tues:** Exodus 20:1-17;
Wed: Proverbs 7; **Thurs:** Memorize 1 Thessalonians 4:3;
Fri: 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; **Sat:** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Week of July 1 – 6

Mon: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; **Tues:** 1 Corinthians 15:1-34;
Wed: 1 Cor. 15:35-58; **Thurs:** Memorize 1 Thess. 4:16-17;
Fri: John 14; **Sat:** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Week of July 8 – 13

Mon: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10; **Tues:** 1 Peter 2;
Wed: 1 John 1; **Thurs:** Memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:9;
Fri: Romans 5; **Sat:** 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10

Week of July 15 – 20

Mon: 1 Thessalonians 5:11-15; **Tues:** 1 Timothy 5:17-25;
Wed: Hebrews 12:1-17; **Thurs:** Romans 12; **Fri:** Romans 13;
Sat: 1 Thessalonians 5:11-15

Week of July 22 – 27

Mon: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28; **Tues:** Colossians 3;
Wed: Galatians 5:13-26; **Thurs:** Memorize 1 Thess. 5:18, 22;
Fri: Ephesians 4:17-32; **Sat:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28

Week of July 29 – August 3

Mon: 2 Thessalonians 1; **Tues:** Acts 4; **Wed:** Acts 5;
Thurs: 2 Corinthians 11:22-33; **Fri:** 2 Timothy 3;
Sat: 2 Thessalonians 1

Week of August 5 – 10

Mon: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; **Tues:** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18;
Wed: Matthew 24:4-31; **Thurs:** 2 Peter 3;
Fri: Revelation 19:7 – 20:4; **Sat:** 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Week of August 12 – 17

Mon: 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – 3:5; **Tues:** Romans 8;
Wed: Colossians 2; **Thurs:** Memorize 2 Thess. 2:13;
Fri: Philippians 2; **Sat:** 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – 3:5

Week of August 19 – 24

Mon: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18; **Tues:** Romans 16;
Wed: 1 Timothy 6; **Thurs:** 1 Corinthians 5; **Fri:** Titus 3;
Sat: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

Coming Next Quarter
(September – November 2024)

Romans, Part 1

Introduction to 1 and 2 Thessalonians

Author: The Apostle Paul

Date: Approximately A.D. 51

The two Thessalonian letters are among the oldest of the New Testament books.

Theme: The overriding theme of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians is the return of Jesus Christ. In fact, Christ's return is mentioned in every chapter of both Thessalonian letters, hence the theme of this quarter's study is ***Jesus is Coming Back!*** The books unveil some truths about the Rapture of the church, the Tribulation, and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ; but most importantly, they teach us how we should live in light of the certainty and nearness of Christ's return. As you study 1 and 2 Thessalonians, ask yourself this question: "*Since I know that Jesus is coming back in the future, how should I live **right now?***"

Historical Setting: The background for both 1 and 2 Thessalonians is found in Acts 16:6 – 18:11.

Paul and Silas left their "home base" of Antioch in Syria on the second of Paul's missionary journeys (Acts 15:40-41). They retraced much of the path of Paul's First Missionary Journey, traveling across Asia Minor (the modern country of Turkey). In the city of Lystra they met Timothy, who accompanied them on the rest of their journey (Acts 16:1-4).

God led Paul and his companions to cross the sea to Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10). They went to the city of Philippi (Acts 16:12), established a church, and were thrown in jail on trumped up charges (Acts 16:20-24). God miraculously freed them from jail (Acts

16:25-26), and they traveled on to the city of Thessalonica (Acts 17:1). Paul preached in the Jewish synagogue three Sabbaths, before the Jews ran them out of town (Acts 17:2-9).

Upon leaving Thessalonica, Paul, Silas, and Timothy went to the city of Berea (Acts 17:10-12). The Jews from Thessalonica followed them to Berea and stirred up a riot there (Acts 17:13). The believers in Berea sent Paul away (for his own safety) to Athens. Silas and Timothy remained in Berea for some time before rejoining Paul (Acts 17:14-15). Later, Paul moved on from Athens to Corinth (Acts 18:1).

While he was in Corinth (a period of 18 months; see Acts 18:11), Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to check on the believers' spiritual progress, and to establish and comfort them (1 Thess. 3:1-2). Timothy brought back a good report but told Paul the Thessalonian believers were worried about the fate of their Christian loved ones who had died. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians to calm their fears and give them further instructions.

Soon after sending them 1 Thessalonians, Paul received a report that the believers there were troubled by false doctrine. Some false teachers told them that Paul's teaching concerning the Rapture was wrong and that they were living under God's judgment (the Day of the Lord). Because the Thessalonians were so troubled (2 Thess. 2:2-3), Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians to correct this doctrinal error and to comfort and encourage them.

Evidence of Genuine Salvation

Brenda was puzzled. As a fairly new Christian, she watched other believers for examples of how she should behave. The thing that puzzled her was that some of those who had attended Sunday School and church for a long time didn't seem to want to serve the Lord.

When the Sunday School teacher asked for volunteers to serve as class officers, Brenda was eager but felt unsure of herself. It seemed that Carolyn, who had been in church for many years, would be a capable class officer. Brenda mentioned it to her.

Carolyn's harsh reply surprised Brenda. Carolyn refused to serve in any way. She told Brenda that she had a life of her own and didn't have time to work at church. She said the church leaders were always begging people to work, but she had better things to do with her time. Brenda wondered why any Christian would refuse to serve the Lord. She decided that Carolyn wasn't such a fine example of how a Christian should live.

What attitudes and behaviors mark a person as a genuine Christian – one who is living with Jesus' return in mind?

1 Thess. 1:1 This letter was sent from Paul, Silas (Silvanus), and Timothy (Timotheus) to the church of the Thessalonians. “_____ be unto you, and _____, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Thess. 1:2 How often did Paul pray for and thank God for the Thessalonians?

The next verse tells why he was so thankful for the Thessalonians.

1 Thess. 1:3 Paul remembered them for three things: “your _____ of faith, and _____ of love, and _____ of hope.”

Work of faith means work that is the result of one's faith in Christ. Faith that expresses itself in works is an evidence of genuine salvation. **Labor of love** means labor prompted by their love for Jesus Christ. Christians should be eager to serve the Lord, out of love for Him and gratitude for the love He has shown us. **Patience of hope** means patience that is marked by hope: hopeful endurance. You will learn more about what these terms mean in verses 9 & 10.

1 Thess. 1:4 How did Paul refer to the Thessalonians?

What did he know about them?

1 Thess. 1:5 Paul reminded the Thessalonians that it wasn't his words that changed their lives. The Gospel came to them "in _____, and in the _____
_____, and in much _____."

1 Thess. 1:6 Who did the Thessalonians follow?

They received God's Word "in much _____, with _____ of the Holy Ghost."

1 Thess. 1:7 The Thessalonian Christians lived in such a way that they were examples to many other believers. What kind of example are you setting for other believers?

1 Thess. 1:8 The Gospel spread from the Thessalonian church. How far did it spread?

1 Thess. 1:9 Who did the Thessalonians turn **to**?

What did they turn away **from**?

Who did they **serve**?

1 Thess. 1:10 Who were they waiting for?

The return of Jesus Christ is the overriding theme of 1 & 2 Thessalonians. In fact, it is mentioned in every chapter of both letters!

What has Jesus delivered us from?

The Thessalonians' **work of faith** (v. 3) was that they had turned to God from idols (v. 9). Their **labor of love** (v. 3) was that they served the living and true God (v. 9). They had **patience of hope** (v. 3) because they were waiting for Jesus to come back from heaven (v. 10). Because of their **election of God** (v. 4), they had been delivered from the wrath to come (v. 10).

Concluding Thoughts: Paul praised the Thessalonians because of their genuine Christianity. There was no doubt in his mind that they were truly saved, because their lives gave evidence of salvation. The evidences of salvation included in this passage are:

1. Work of Faith – turning away from idols and to God.
2. Labor of Love – serving the Lord.
3. Patience of Hope – waiting for the Lord's return.
4. Election of God – delivered from wrath to come.
5. Serving as an example to others.

What about you? If you were on trial for being a Christian and your life was compared to this list, is there enough evidence present in your life to prove that you are a Christian?

If you are not truly saved, read the verses printed on the back of this book and turn to Jesus for salvation right now. If you are already saved but are disobeying God by not serving Him, confess that sin and get to work this week. Ask your Sunday School teacher for help and guidance. If you are saved and your life gives clear evidence of that fact, then thank God for His grace.

Project: Memorize **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**. Do the **Daily Bible Readings** (page 4) each day this week.

June 9, 2024

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Marks of Godly Ministry

How would you describe a successful and godly church?

It's popular in our day to look upon large, fast-growing churches as being successful. Certainly, mega churches get much more attention and publicity than smaller churches; but are size, activity, and prominence the marks of a successful and godly ministry?

We occasionally hear of prominent churches that are riddled with corruption and immorality. Sometimes the ones that seem the most successful are actually rotten on the inside.

What about your church, your Sunday School class, and your personal service to God? What characteristics mark it as a godly ministry, pleasing to the Lord Jesus? Let's find out.

1 Thess. 2:1 Paul reminded the Thessalonians about his brief ministry in their city. He said his ministry there was NOT _____. God did great things in Thessalonica. Many people believed in Jesus Christ, and a strong, evangelistic church was established (see Acts 17:1-4).

1 Thess. 2:2 Paul and his companions were in Philippi just before coming to Thessalonica (Acts 16:11-40). How were they treated in Philippi (see Acts 16:19-24)?

Did the abuse and shameful treatment at Philippi make Paul and his companions timid about preaching the Gospel in Thessalonica?

How did they preach it?

The first mark of godly ministry is **BOLDNESS IN SPITE OF OPPOSITION**. The second mark is found in the next verse.

1 Thess. 2:3 “For our exhortation (preaching and teaching) was not of _____, nor of _____, nor in _____.”

Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica was marked by **HONESTY**. This is the second mark of a godly ministry. Let’s find the third.

1 Thess. 2:4 Note that they were “*allowed of God*,” and “*put in trust*” to preach the Gospel. They saw their ministry as a sacred trust, given to them by Almighty God. Who did they seek to please?

1 Thess. 2:5 They didn’t use flattering _____ or a cloak of _____ when they preached. They didn’t try to impress people or enrich themselves. God was Paul’s witness to this fact.

1 Thess. 2:6 Did they seek approval and glory from men?

The third mark of godly ministry is **PLEASING GOD RATHER THAN MEN** (see Acts 5:29).

1 Thess. 2:7 How did Paul describe their ministry?

1 Thess. 2:8 They loved the Thessalonians very much. Because of this, they wanted to give them “not the _____ of God _____, but also our own _____, because ye were _____ to us.”

The fourth mark of godly ministry is **GENTLENESS AND LOVE**. That describes Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica, and it describes any truly godly ministry today.

1 Thess. 2:9 “For ye remember, brethren, our _____ and _____: for laboring _____ and _____.” Paul and his friends worked very hard in Thessalonica. Why did they do this?

1 Thess. 2:10 How did they behave among the Thessalonians?

1 Thess. 2:11 Paul exhorted, comforted, and charged the Thessalonians. He did this “as a _____ doth his _____.”

1 Thess. 2:12 How did Paul want the Thessalonians to walk?

He encouraged them to live in a way that brought glory, rather than shame, to the Lord.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy worked hard in Thessalonica. They were faithful to the Lord and taught the new believers there to do the same. The fifth mark of godly ministry is **HARD WORK AND FAITHFULNESS**.

Concluding Thoughts: Let’s review the five marks of godly ministry found in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12:

1. **Boldness in Spite of Opposition** – v. 1-2
2. **Honesty** – v. 3
3. **Pleasing God rather than Men** – v. 4-6
4. **Gentleness and Love** – v. 7-8
5. **Hard Work and Faithfulness** – v. 9-12

How does your church compare to that list? How does your Sunday School class measure up? What about your own personal service to God? How does it measure up?

This list based on 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 can be used as criteria for evaluating the godliness and genuineness of our ministry, as well as that of others. If your personal ministry doesn’t measure up in some area, confess that as sin and ask God to help you. If your class or church is deficient, pray for it and try to improve it.

Project: Pray daily this week that God will make these marks evident in the ministry of your church, your class, and yourself.

Results of Genuine Salvation

Two weeks ago our lesson focused on the evidences of genuine salvation. That lesson helped us learn how to recognize and identify an authentic believer. Remember, everyone who claims to be a Christian isn't. There are many spiritual counterfeits in the world and in the church.

This week's lesson focuses on the results of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ. What things will naturally occur when a person genuinely repents of his or her sins and turns their life over to the control of Jesus Christ? What are the results of genuine Christianity? Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20 to find out.

1 Thess. 2:13 Paul was very thankful for the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:2). How did he say they received the Word of God?

The Bible is a point of debate and controversy in many places, but genuine believers receive the Bible as God's Word, not just the words of men.

1 Thess. 2:14 Whose example did the Thessalonians follow?

How did their countrymen treat them?

Genuine believers follow the example of other Christians, and they often suffer for their faith (2 Tim. 3:12). The Thessalonians were genuine believers, and their lives showed the results of their conversion. In the next two verses, the Bible contrasts the Jews who rejected the Gospel with authentic Christians.

1 Thess. 2:15 What did the Jews do to Jesus and the prophets?

What did they do to Paul and his companions?

Did those Jews please God (see Heb. 11:6)?

They are also “_____ to all men.”

1 Thess. 2:16 Why did the Jews try to keep Paul from preaching to the Gentiles?

Because they rejected the Gospel and attempted to obstruct the Gospel, the Jews filled up their sins and came under God’s wrath to the **uttermost** (contrast Heb. 7:25). What a frightening thought!

As a result of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ, believers will **receive** the Bible as God’s Word, **follow** the example of other believers, and they may even **suffer** persecution.

Those who reject the Gospel will **persecute** Christians, **cannot** please God, are **contrary** to all men, try to **prevent** people from being saved, are **sinful**, and therefore are under God’s **wrath**.

What a contrast! The remaining verses of this chapter contain even more results of genuine salvation.

1 Thess. 2:17 Remember that Paul had to leave Thessalonica hastily because of attack and persecution (Acts 17:5-10). What was his great desire?

1 Thess. 2:18 Paul tried on more than one occasion to return to Thessalonica. What prevented him?

Another result of genuine Christianity is a desire for Christian fellowship. Paul loved the Thessalonians, so he longed to see them. Genuine Christians have a desire to be around God’s people. This desire should be sufficient to get them to church, provided they are physically able. It should cause us to long for and make time for fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. **If an individual claims to be a Christian but has no desire to attend church, his or her salvation is suspect.**

1 Thess. 2:19 Paul described the Thessalonians as his _____, his _____, and his _____ of _____. Note that Paul again mentioned the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word **hope** literally means confident expectation. Paul was confident the Thessalonians would continue to grow in Christ, and that fact brought him much joy. In Roman athletic games, the winner received a victor's crown. At the return of Jesus Christ, Paul was confident he would receive a crown of rejoicing because of the genuine saving faith the Thessalonians received through his faithful ministry among them.

1 Thess. 2:20 “For ye are our glory and _____.”

Those who are genuinely saved will experience joy in seeing others obediently follow Christ.

Concluding Thoughts: When a person comes to know Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, certain changes will result. This week's scripture passage names several effects of genuine salvation. As a result of trusting Jesus, you will:

1. Receive the Word of God.
2. Follow the example of other believers.
3. Suffer persecution for your faith.
4. Desire Christian fellowship.
5. Be joyful when others obediently follow Christ.

Does your life show the results of genuine salvation? If it does, thank God for changing your life. If it doesn't, read the verses printed on the back of this book, turn from your sin, and ask Jesus to transform your life.

Project: Receive the Bible as the Word of God, not the mere words of men. Do the **Daily Bible Readings** (page 4) each day, and demonstrate your desire for Christian fellowship by coming to Sunday School. Memorize **Philippians 1:6**.

Concern for the Brethren

How much do you care about your Christian brothers and sisters?

We live in a very cold and uncaring world. If one word were chosen to describe the state of people in our modern world, it might be the word **ISOLATION**. That word vividly describes our society. People surround us, but we are actually isolated.

People everywhere are dying for someone to care about them. They try to find love and care in bars and on the Internet. Many pierce their bodies and dye their hair strange colors in a silent scream that asks, **“Will somebody please love me?”**

In this week’s lesson, you will learn how deeply the Apostle Paul loved the believers at Thessalonica. His example should motivate us to care for those around us.

1 Thess. 3:1 Remember that Paul, Silas, and Timothy spent a brief time in Thessalonica before the Jews stirred up a riot and forced them to leave town (Acts 17:1-10). Paul had a great desire to return and encourage the new converts in Thessalonica. Soon he could stand it no longer. Where was Paul?

1 Thess. 3:2 Who did he send to Thessalonica?

Find the three ways Paul described Timothy:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

He sent Timothy for two purposes: “to _____ you, and to _____ you concerning your faith.”

1 Thess. 3:3 Paul loved the Thessalonians so much that he didn't want them to be shaken or discouraged by the afflictions he faced. He was more concerned for their welfare than for his own.

1 Thess. 3:4 What had Paul already told them?

1 Thess. 3:5 When he could stand it no longer, Paul sent Timothy to find out how the Thessalonians were doing. What did he fear might have happened to them?

1 Thess. 3:6 What news did Timothy bring back to Paul?

1 Thess. 3:7 What did the faithfulness of the Thessalonians do for Paul?

Remember this: **your faithfulness (or lack of it) has a great impact on other Christians.** It will encourage or discourage them.

1 Thess. 3:8 “For now we _____, **IF** ye _____
_____ in the Lord.”

Your faithfulness helps others keep on living for the Lord.

1 Thess. 3:9 There were no words sufficient to thank God for the joy Paul felt in knowing that the Thessalonians stood fast and persevered in their new faith.

Your faithfulness brings joy to other Christians.

1 Thess. 3:10 How much did Paul pray that he might return to Thessalonica?

He wanted to go there to “_____ that
which is _____ in your _____.”

1 Thess. 3:11 Satan previously prevented Paul from returning to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2:18). What did Paul ask God to do?

1 Thess. 3:12 Paul prayed that they would _____ and _____ in love for each other. These words mean a superabundant and overflowing amount, like pouring a gallon of juice into an 8-ounce glass. They were to love one another (fellow believers in the church) and all men (those outside the church). Paul’s love for them was to be their example.

1 Thess. 3:13 Paul prayed that the Lord would “_____ your hearts _____ in _____ before God.” Paul wanted them to be firmly fixed in their faith, and to live holy, righteous lives that bring honor to the Lord.

Here is another reference to the return of Christ. **Jesus is coming back, which should motivate us to holy living.**

Concluding Thoughts: Paul cared more about his brothers and sisters in Christ than for his own safety. He was extremely thankful when they lived right, he deeply desired to be with them, and he prayed that they would grow in the Lord.

Do you have that kind of concern for your Christian brothers and sisters? Who are your brothers and sisters in Christ?

What about your Sunday School class members – do you care about them? Do you pray for them and contact them? Do you rejoice over their spiritual progress? Do you want to spend time with them (in class, in personal visits, and in class fellowships)?

Ask the Lord to give you a deep love and concern for your brothers and sisters in Christ. One way you show love for the brethren is by living right, because your faithfulness (or lack of it) influences others. Confess and turn away from any sin, and live right.

Project: Memorize **1 Thessalonians 3:12**. Do something to show love or encouragement to a fellow believer this week.

Relationships That Honor God

These days we hear about immorality at every level of society. News reports tell of a woman who is shot and killed by her live-in boyfriend. Through shocking revelations, we learn of church members and even church leaders who are involved in sexual sins. We often hear of elected officials who make a good public appearance, but their lifestyle is marked by immorality and deceit.

All of these examples occur because people are involved in relationships that do not honor God. Those who are living like they know Jesus is coming back should have relationships that honor God. What are His standards for our relationships? What behaviors should be completely avoided?

1 Thess. 4:1 Paul begged and encouraged the Thessalonian Christians to behave the way he had told them, so their lives would please God. He wanted them to “abound _____ and _____” in right behavior.

1 Thess. 4:2 Paul reminded them of his commands to them.

1 Thess. 4:3 “For this is the _____ of God, even your _____, that ye should _____ from _____.” The word translated **fornication** in this verse includes all types of sexual immorality. Does God want Christians involved in sexual immorality?

God promised to judge people who participate in sexual immorality (Heb. 13:4).

1 Thess. 4:4 The word **vessel** here refers to your physical body. How should you **possess** (keep, maintain) your body (see also 1 Cor. 6:18-20)?

1 Thess. 4:5 **Lust** and **concupiscence** refer to sensual desire for something that is forbidden. We must not let lust and evil desires control our lives. When we do, we act like those who “*know not God*” – lost people.

1 Thess. 4:6 “That no man go _____ and _____ his brother in any matter.” The word **defraud** means to take advantage of someone. We must not exceed or transgress the limits of proper, moral behavior. Sexual immorality is selfishness and stealing from others, and brings God’s judgment: “the Lord is the _____ of all such.”

1 Thess. 4:7 What has God called us to?

1 Thess. 4:8 The guidelines you have just read are **God’s will for you**. If you despise and reject them, who are you actually rejecting?

1 Thess. 4:9 What did Paul praise the Thessalonians for?

1 Thess. 4:10 Their love went beyond their own church to include believers throughout their region. Paul encouraged them toward even greater love.

1 Thess. 4:11 Paul told them to do three things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

1 Thess. 4:12 How were they to behave toward those outside the church (unsaved persons)?

Concluding Thoughts: In this passage of scripture God told us several things about relationships that honor Him. First, we were

told to do the things we have already been taught, so we can **please God with our behavior** (v. 1-2). Next, God made it clear that our relationships should be **free from sexual sins** (v. 3) and characterized by **moral restraint** and self-control (v. 4). Relationships that honor God are **not controlled by lust** and evil desires (verse 5), and **do not involve defrauding others** (v. 5). Our relationships must not lead us to uncleanness, but to **holiness** (v. 6). We should always **love the brethren** (v. 9-10), and **live right in front of the lost world** (v. 11-12).

Those are God's standards for relationships that honor Him. If you reject these truths, you are not rejecting the ideas of man, but the clear commands of Almighty God (v. 8).

How do your relationships measure up to God's standards? If you are involved in a relationship that does not honor God, you are headed for trouble. God will judge your sin. Are you involved in

- Sexual immorality (evil thoughts or actions)?
- Lust (including pornography)?
- Defrauding others (improper dress, talk, or actions)?
- Uncleanness (behavior that doesn't make you more like Jesus)?

You must confess those things as **sin**. You must break off that improper relationship **NOW!** You should seek to live each and every day by God's standards.

You have been confronted with the truth, direct from God's Word. What will you do? Ask God for help, confess your sins, break off any improper relationships, and ask God to help you live a life of holiness that honors Him. Begin right now.

Project: Memorize **1 Thessalonians 4:3**. Call your Sunday School teacher and ask him or her for advice about breaking off that ungodly relationship. Take definite actions to obey God, and He will surely bless your obedience. Don't miss Sunday School this week!

July 7, 2024

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The Rapture of the Church

What happens after death? Do we continue to live somewhere, or are we like animals that simply cease to exist? What happens to the Christian who dies? What happens to his or her body? What, if anything, do we have to look forward to after death?

The subject of life after death is very popular today. A recent search of a popular secular book distributor resulted in tens of thousands of books that relate to life after death. A search of the entire Internet produces hundreds of millions of matches.

People everywhere seem interested in what happens after death, and Christians are no exception. The Thessalonian believers were eagerly looking forward to the Rapture of the church, but they were worried about their loved ones who had already died. Let's learn about the Rapture as we study 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

1 Thess. 4:13 “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are _____, that ye _____ not, even as others which have no _____.”

The word **asleep** in verse 13 refers to Christians who have already died (see verse 14, which speaks of those who “*sleep in Jesus*”). The believers at Thessalonica knew that Jesus was coming back to take them home to heaven. Jesus had already promised this (see John 14:1-3), and angels repeated it (see Acts 1:10-11). The Thessalonians were worried that their brothers and sisters in Christ who died before the Rapture might be left out.

1 Thess. 4:14 Do you believe that Jesus died and rose again?

When a Christian dies, he or she is translated immediately into the presence of Jesus in heaven (2 Cor. 5:6-8). With the **exact same certainty** we know that Jesus died and rose again, we can **know** that

the dead in Christ will come with Jesus when He returns for His church. **There is no reason to doubt.**

1 Thess. 4:15 Those who are alive at the time of the Rapture will **NOT** do what?

This is the Word of the Lord. Those who are already dead when the Rapture takes place will not be left out.

1 Thess. 4:16 Who will descend from heaven?

The Lord Jesus will not send an angel or some other representative; He will come personally to take His children out of this world and home to heaven.

Three sounds will accompany the Rapture. What are they?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

After those sounds, who will rise **FIRST**?

Now, wait a minute. In verse 14, the Bible says when the Lord comes He will **bring** the dead in Christ with Him. In verse 16, it says that the dead in Christ will **rise** first. **How can they come with Him and rise from the dead?**

When a Christian dies, his or her spirit goes immediately to be with Jesus in heaven, but his or her body is buried in the earth and ultimately decays. At the time of the Rapture, the Lord will bring the spirits of the dead in Christ with Him, and call forth their bodies to meet them in the air (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 52-53). Even though their bodies may have been burned, eaten by animals, or completely decayed to dust, the Lord will reconstitute them, transform them, raise them from the dead, and call them forth to meet Him in the air. These transformed, glorified bodies will then be reunited with their spirits, which have been in heaven. The dead in Christ will not be left out of the Rapture, but what about those who are alive when the Lord returns?

1 Thess. 4:17 Where will living Christians be caught up to?

Who will we meet there?

How long will we be with the Lord?

The Rapture must be distinguished from the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. At the Rapture, the Lord calls His children forth to meet Him in the air, and then takes them home with Him to heaven. Seven years of terrible Tribulation will then occur on earth, after which Jesus will return bodily to earth and establish His 1,000-year reign from Jerusalem. That is the Second Coming.

1 Thess. 4:18 “Wherefore _____ one another with these _____.”

Concluding Thoughts: What impact should the truth of the Rapture have on us? The Bible says it should comfort us.

Our world is full of “ideas” and “theories” about what happens after death, but the Bible – God’s inerrant Word – reveals the **TRUTH**.

Take comfort in these truths. Receive them as the Word of God, not merely the ideas of men (1 Thess. 4:8).

Do thoughts of death worry and trouble you? If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior you have no need to fear; but if you do not know Him you have every reason for fear and dread. If you’re not saved, please accept Christ’s free gift of salvation today. Read the scriptures printed on the back of this book, confess your sins, and ask God to save you. That will enable you to live for and look forward to the return of Christ. Jesus is coming back!

Project: Memorize **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**. Be on the lookout for someone you can comfort with this teaching. Thank God daily that He has your future planned out.

Stark Contrasts

John was confused and a little discouraged. Ever since accepting Christ, he noticed that things were changing. Was it his imagination, or were his coworkers keeping him at arm's length? It also seemed like he had less and less in common with his old fishing buddies. Sometimes he felt like a fish out of water!

Do you ever feel like you don't fit in with the world? Do you find that you're simply not in step with those around you? Do you sometimes feel like an oddball because of your convictions? Have you ever wondered why you feel that way?

The reason is that there are **stark contrasts** between genuine Christians and lost people. If a photograph or video image has a lot of contrast, there is a lot of difference and distinction between the light and dark areas. This week's lesson will teach us about some of the stark differences between saved and lost people.

Deception vs. Understanding

1 Thess. 5:1 “But of the _____ and the _____, brethren, ye have no need that I _____ unto you.”

Paul didn't need to write to the Thessalonians about when the Lord would return, because that information is reserved for God alone (Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32). Any person who predicts a date for the Lord's return is a false prophet, inspired by the devil.

1 Thess. 5:2 How will the Day of the Lord come?

The **Day of the Lord** is a phrase used many times in the Bible. It refers to a future time of God's wrath and judgment upon sinners. The Day of the Lord will be unexpected and surprising.

1 Thess. 5:3 What will the lost be saying when sudden destruction comes upon them?

The word **travail** refers to the pain a woman experiences during childbirth. Throughout her pregnancy she knows that labor will come, but she doesn't know when. When labor starts, it continues until it is completed. In the same way, God's judgment will come, but we don't know when. When it starts, it will not stop until it has come to completion.

Darkness vs. Light

1 Thess. 5:4 "But ye, brethren, are not in _____."
When a sinner comes to Christ, he or she is immediately translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light (1 Pet. 2:9).

1 Thess. 5:5 Saved people are children of _____.
They are **not** of _____.

Sleep vs. Wakefulness

1 Thess. 5:6 Since we are not of the night, "let us not _____, as do others; but let us _____ and be _____."

In this and the next verse, **sleep** refers to spiritual carelessness and a lack of spiritual watchfulness, not physical death as in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14. The word **sober** means to be serious and spiritually alert.

1 Thess. 5:7 When does sleep usually take place?

Christians shouldn't be spiritually asleep because they "*are not of the night*" (v. 5).

Drunkenness vs. Sobriety

1 Thess. 5:7 When does drunkenness usually occur?

1 Thess. 5:8 Christians (“*who are of the day*”) should be _____. What should we put on?

Wrath vs. Salvation

1 Thess. 5:9 “God hath **not** appointed us to _____, but to obtain _____ by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This verse confirms the fact that believers will **not** experience God’s wrath poured out upon the world during the Tribulation.

1 Thess. 5:10 Who died for us?

The word **sleep** in verse 10 refers to death, as it did in chapter 4. Whether the Christian is living or dead at the time of the Lord’s return, he or she will live with Jesus forever!

Concluding Thoughts: This scripture passage reveals the stark contrasts between saved people who live with the expectation that Jesus is coming back, and unsaved people who live for themselves and for right now. Let’s review those contrasts.

Lost People:	Saved People:
Deception	Understanding
Darkness	Light
Sleep	Wakefulness
Drunkenness	Sobriety
Wrath	Salvation

Which list looks more like your spiritual life? Has this study confirmed in your heart that you are a genuine child of God? If so, take comfort in that fact. The reason you sometimes feel like an oddball in the world is because **you are different**. A child of God simply does not fit into this world. Thank God that you are different.

Or, do you feel that you fit in very well with the lost world around you? Do the descriptions above of lost people match up with your life? Have you come to realize that you really aren’t a genuine child of God? If you want to be saved, you can be. Read the simple plan

of salvation printed on the back of this book. Confess your sins and ask Jesus to save you. You'll be glad you did. Call your Sunday School teacher if you have questions.

Project: Memorize **1 Thessalonians 5:9**. Thank God each day that you do not walk in darkness.

Encourage Others

Samuel pastors the Typical Baptist Church. He is frustrated and discouraged because his church members don't follow his leadership, and personally they ignore him. After the deacons and church voted overwhelmingly to start a visitation program, Samuel expected great participation. The "visitation program" ended up being Samuel and one Sunday School teacher. Samuel and his family live in the parsonage next door to the church, but they are seldom invited to class fellowships, showers, birthday parties, or other social events.

Ann is a member of the Average Baptist Church. After her husband left her and she lost her job, she became very discouraged. When she missed church one Sunday, she expected her teacher or someone from her class to call. No one did. Ann is struggling and needs friendship, but no one from church is reaching out to her.

Toby was excited about becoming the pastor of the Common Baptist Church, until he got out in the community and started making outreach visits. He soon learned that Common Baptist Church had a bad reputation in the community because of its many fights, splits, and pastor firings. One man who lived near the church said if his TV went out and he couldn't watch wrestling, he would come to a church business meeting for entertainment!

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ should **NOT** be like those described above. The church should be a warm, loving, accepting place where people receive encouragement. In this week's passage we will learn what the Bible says about encouraging others.

Encourage Other Believers

1 Thess. 5:11 What two things should we do for one another?

1. _____
2. _____

Encourage Spiritual Leaders

1 Thess. 5:12 The word **beseech** means to beg or implore. What did Paul beg the Thessalonians to do?

The word **know** literally means to have experiential knowledge of, understand and consider. We must understand the seriousness and importance of our pastors and spiritual leaders. The Bible says our leaders in the church do the following three things:

1. “Who _____ among you”
2. “Are _____ in the Lord”
3. “_____ you”

Our pastors and leaders work hard among us, they oversee us as one carrying responsibility, and they reprove and warn us. We should **recognize** and **appreciate** this very important work that they do.

1 Thess. 5:13 How should we think of our spiritual leaders?

Why should we do this?

Because of the very important work they do, we should love our pastors and leaders. It is impossible to think **too highly** of your pastor (1 Tim. 5:17). There is one final thing that will encourage your pastor: “And be at _____ among yourselves.”

Encourage the Weak and Needy

1 Thess. 5:14 This verse contains four instructions about encouraging our brothers and sisters in Christ.

1. “_____ them that are _____,”
2. “_____ the _____,”
3. “_____ the _____,”
4. “be _____ toward _____.”

Let’s examine those words. The **unruly** are those who are disobedient and refuse to be ruled, and they must be warned. The **feble-minded** are those who are fainthearted, and we must encourage them. The **weak** are physically without strength, and

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they must be supported. We should be **patient** with everyone because we are all different.

1 Thess. 5:15 How should we treat those who treat us badly?

“But ever _____ that which is _____.”

Rather than returning evil for evil, we should purposely do good to everyone. This instruction is especially for brothers and sisters in Christ (“*among yourselves*”), but also applies to our relationships in the world (“*and to all men*”). If you want to baffle and disarm an “enemy,” do something good for him or her.

Concluding Thoughts: We should respect and encourage our pastors and other spiritual leaders. We should intentionally encourage and do good things for our fellow believers. Can you imagine what our church would be like if every Christian followed those guidelines. We would live in a continual state of revival, and people would be eager to join.

How can you be an encouragement to your pastor and spiritual leaders? First, you should confess any sin of ignoring them, and thank God for all they do for your church. You must think highly of them and love them. What is a practical way you can show love for your spiritual leaders this week? Finally, you need to maintain peace within the church.

How can you help and encourage Christian brothers and sisters? Do you know someone who needs a warning? Who do you know that needs encouragement and support? Do you know someone who just needs some patience and understanding? Be sure not to return evil for evil, and intentionally do good to others.

Project: Think of practical ways to encourage others. Write a note. Give a gift. Spend time with a struggler. Maintain peace. Refuse to return evil for evil. Do it this week.

July 28, 2024

1 Thessalonians 5:16-28

Guidelines for Godly Living

Elizabeth grew up in a Christian home and attended church pretty regularly. Her parents gave her a lot of guidance in her young years, so she came to depend on their warnings and advice. Elizabeth graduated from high school and she went off to the state university, several hours away from home. She was excited about college and eager to study toward her chosen major.

Soon Elizabeth became confused. She found the professors and other students promoting a code of behavior that was selfish, ungodly, and licentious. She found life more complicated than she thought, and struggled with making her own decisions. She called her parents and told them of her dilemma. She asked, “How are Christians supposed to live in this lost world?”

What advice would you give Elizabeth? In this week’s lesson from 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28 you will find several guidelines for godly living in the midst of a lost and corrupt world.

1 Thess. 5:16 When should we rejoice?

Joy (rejoicing) comes from a realization of what God has done for those of us who are saved. “Happiness” is tied to what “happens,” but Christians can have joy regardless of what happens to them. Joy abides and transcends current circumstances

1 Thess. 5:17 When should we pray?

Do you think that means you must stay on your knees with your head bowed 24 hours a day?

What do you think it means?

1 Thess. 5:18 “In _____ thing give _____.”

This is God's will for us (see also 1 Thess. 4:3). We are not required to be thankful **for** everything, but we are commanded to be thankful **in** every circumstance. Thank God right now, regardless of your situation.

1 Thess. 5:19 “_____ not the _____.” The word **quench** means to put out a fire. You can put out a fire by depriving it of fuel or by smothering it with water or dirt. What are some ways you might quench the Spirit?

1 Thess. 5:20 **Despise** means to take lightly or ignore, and **prophesyings** refers to the preaching of God's Word. How should we react to Bible preaching?

If you neglect church attendance (Heb. 10:25) or ignore the preacher's teaching and warnings, you are violating this instruction and you will quench the Spirit.

1 Thess. 5:21 **Prove** means to examine and discern. The world pushes a lot of things at us. What should we hold fast?

What do you think we should do with the rest?

1 Thess. 5:22 What should we abstain from?

Is it all right for a Christian to go with his friends to a bar, if he drinks only a Coke while he's there?

What does this instruction tell you about going to wicked movies, going to nightclubs, and dressing like the world?

1 Thess. 5:23 If you do the things listed in verses 16-22, God will “_____ you wholly.” Paul prayed that their _____, _____, and _____ would be preserved **blameless** until Jesus comes back.

- 1 Thess. 5:24** **God is faithful.** He called us to salvation; and if we are submitted and obedient to Him, He will **sanctify** and **preserve** us.
- 1 Thess. 5:25** We should _____ for others.
- 1 Thess. 5:26** In Middle Eastern culture it was and still is common for men to greet each another with an embrace and kiss on the cheek. We should love our fellow Christians.
- 1 Thess. 5:27** Paul told the Thessalonians to read his letter to all the brethren. We should faithfully read the Bible.
- 1 Thess. 5:28** This is Paul’s closing prayer: “The _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”

Concluding Thoughts: This scripture passage contains many guidelines for godly living: How do you measure up?

1. Rejoice – 5:16
2. Pray – 5:17
3. Be thankful – 5:18
4. Don’t quench the Spirit – 5:19
5. Don’t reject preaching – 5:20
6. Be discerning – 5:21
7. Don’t even **look** like you’re doing evil – 5:22
8. Trust God to sanctify and preserve you – 5:23-24
9. Pray for others – 5:25
10. Love others – 5:26
11. Read the Bible – 5:27

Is there something you’re neglecting? Do you need to repent or recommit to living by God’s guidelines? If so, tell God right now.

Project: Memorize **1 Thessalonians 5:18** and **22**.

Endure Persecution

Christians face persecution today in over 40 countries around the world. Violent but non-deadly persecution is the common means of suppressing Christianity in Iran. Many Chinese Christians are becoming prisoners or martyrs because their government wants to completely eradicate Christianity in their land. Christians in North Korea are imprisoned, tortured, and brutally killed.

Why are things like this happening? Why aren't those who do such terrible acts punished? Why isn't there justice? Why doesn't God intervene to stop the persecution of His people?

You and I may never face such severe persecution, but we do have to endure milder forms. How can we (and Christians around the world) endure persecution?

2 Thess. 1:1 Just like 1 Thessalonians, this letter was sent from _____, _____, and _____ to the church at Thessalonica. It was written not long after the first letter, when Paul learned that false teachers were troubling the Thessalonians.

2 Thess. 1:2 “_____ unto you, and _____, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Your Endurance Makes Others Thankful

2 Thess. 1:3 Why did Paul thank God for the Thessalonians?

2 Thess. 1:4 The same Thessalonian Jews who persecuted and pursued Paul (Acts 17:13) continued to persecute the church after he left (1 Thess. 1:6 & 2:14). The faithfulness and endurance exhibited by the Thessalonian Christians made Paul very thankful.

God Will Avenge Your Suffering

2 Thess. 1:6 Skip verse 5 for now; we will come back to it later.
What is a righteous thing for God to do?

The word **recompense** means to repay. Do you realize what you just read? **God promises to pay back those who persecute Christians with trouble and tribulation of their own!** God is keeping tabs, and it is a righteous (just, proper, fitting) thing for Him to repay persecutors (Rom. 12:19; 2 Pet. 2:4-9).

2 Thess. 1:7 What did Paul tell them to do?

Who will be revealed from heaven?

The event described in these verses is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (at the end of the Tribulation) when He returns as the Righteous Judge to set up His kingdom (Rev. 19:11-21).

2 Thess. 1:8 How is Jesus' return described?

On whom will He take vengeance?

At that time, **everyone** who doesn't know Jesus will be objects of His awful wrath!

2 Thess. 1:9 These are terrifying words. How long will those who reject Jesus be punished?

The word **destruction** doesn't mean they will cease to exist; it means they will eternally be in pain, agony, and torment. The Bible describes this as the Second Death (Rev. 20:12-15).

2 Thess. 1:10 Who will glorify and admire the Lord Jesus on that terrible day of judgment and wrath?

In the Bible, the word **saints** refers to all those who have believed and are genuinely saved. Look back now at verse 5.

Benefits of Being Persecuted

2 Thess. 1:5 A **token** is a symbol that proves you belong and entitles you to something. The suffering that the Thessalonians endured proved they were worthy of God's kingdom. **Suffering doesn't make you worthy, but it shows (as a manifest token) that you are worthy.** When you suffer persecution for the Lord Jesus, it shows that you belong to Him and will spend eternity with Him. Look now at verse 11.

2 Thess. 1:11 What did Paul pray for the persecuted Thessalonians?

We should pray for those enduring persecution.

2 Thess. 1:12 Who receives glory when Christians faithfully endure persecution?

Concluding Thoughts: Don't be surprised by persecution. As a matter of fact, the Bible **promises** we will have some (2 Tim. 3:12). God does not ignore the persecution of His children (Rev. 6:9-11), and He **will** punish those who persecute them (Rev. 19:2).

What should we do about persecution?

First, don't worry, because God is watching over all of His children.

Second, if you are being persecuted in any way, thank God that He considers you worthy to suffer for Him (Acts 5:41).

Finally, pray for those who are persecuted.

Why don't you do that right now?

Project: You can learn more about persecution against Christians by visiting the following website: <http://www.persecution.com/>

The Day of the Lord

From time to time we hear the news and entertainment media use the words “Armageddon” and “apocalypse.” During the Cold War, many people believed the Battle of Armageddon would be a global nuclear war that would destroy the planet. In times of Middle East conflict, some have wondered if we were on the brink of Armageddon. The world uses these words very loosely, referring to terrible times of death and destruction, but the Bible has very specific meanings for Armageddon and apocalypse. Another such biblical phrase is the “Day of the Lord” (or the “Day of Christ”).

Paul had promised the Thessalonian believers that the Rapture would occur before the beginning of God’s terrible wrath (1 Thess. 4:13 – 5:9), but false teachers came along, saying that the persecution the Thessalonians were experiencing was part of God’s judgment during the Day of the Lord. They were afraid they had missed the Rapture and the Day of the Lord was upon them. What is the Day of the Lord, and what signs will accompany it?

2 Thess. 2:1 Paul begged the Thessalonians “by the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our _____ unto Him.”
This refers to the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

2 Thess. 2:2 Paul begged them not to be “soon _____ in mind, or be _____.”

False teachers had even sent the Thessalonian believers a forged letter, supposedly from Paul (“*nor by letter, as from us*”). He begged them not to believe that the Day of the Lord was at _____. They obviously believed the Rapture would occur **before** the Day of the Lord, or else this false teaching wouldn’t have troubled them.

Signs of the Day of the Lord

2 Thess. 2:3 The Day of the Lord cannot be present, unless the following two things have happened:

1. _____
2. _____

The “*falling away*” is when the people of earth abandon God and the Bible to worship the Antichrist. The “*man of sin*” is the Antichrist (called “*the beast*” throughout the book of Revelation). Inspired and empowered by Satan, he will rise to rule the world during the Tribulation. The message is clear: if the “*falling away*” has not yet occurred and the Antichrist has not yet been revealed, then the Day of the Lord is **not** yet underway. The next verses describe the Antichrist and what will happen to him.

2 Thess. 2:4 “Who _____ and _____ himself above all that is called God.” Where will he sit?

The Antichrist will seat himself in the rebuilt Temple of God in Jerusalem, declare himself to be God, and demand worship from everyone on earth (Rev. 13:8 & 15). This event is known as the Abomination of Desolation (Dan. 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15).

2 Thess. 2:5 Had Paul already told them these things?

2 Thess. 2:6 There is a restraining force that prevents the Antichrist from coming to power before his time. That restraining force is God’s Holy Spirit. The Antichrist will not be revealed and come to power until after the Rapture of the church.

2 Thess. 2:7 What is already at work in the world?

The spirit of lawlessness and sin is already at work in the world, but it won’t reach its fullest manifestation until the Tribulation. “Only _____ who now _____ will _____, until he be

_____ out of the _____.” God’s restraining power prevents Satan from doing all he wants to do right now, but that restraining power will be withdrawn during the Tribulation. The phrase “*taken out of the way*” doesn’t mean to remove from one place to another; it means to simply step aside so others can pass.

2 Thess. 2:8 What will happen when God’s restraining power steps aside?

What will the Lord do to the Antichrist?

Revelation 19:15-21 describes this further.

2 Thess. 2:9 The Antichrist’s arrival on the world scene will be “after the working of _____,” and accompanied by “_____ and _____ and _____.” The devil will supernaturally empower him to deceive the world.

2 Thess. 2:10 Who will be deceived by the Antichrist? “Them that _____; because they _____ not the love of the _____, that they might be _____.” All the lost people on earth will believe the Antichrist and follow him.

2 Thess. 2:11 What will God send upon the lost?

What will they do?

2 Thess. 2:12 What will happen to all the lost people who believe the Antichrist’s lies?

This is because they refused to believe the truth (Rom. 1:25-32), but instead took pleasure in sin. Sin is desirable and enjoyable for a time (Heb. 11:25), but it carries a very high price tag! These verses

reveal that those who hear the Gospel and reject it before the Rapture will not be saved during the Tribulation.

Concluding Thoughts: The **Day of the Lord** (or Day of Christ) is a future time of God's judgment upon sinners and this sinful world. It is not a 24-hour day, but a **period** of God's severe judgment. The Day of the Lord begins after the Rapture of the church, continues throughout the Tribulation period, and includes the Second Coming when Jesus destroys Satan's forces and brings judgment.

It is comforting to know that God has the future planned out so well that He can tell us very specific things that will happen. He is sovereign and omnipotent, so **His plans will come to pass**.

We are locked in time, but God is not. We know the present and we can remember the past, but we don't know what the future holds. To us, the future is uncertain. To God, the future looks no different than the past. Thank God right now that He has the future in control. The Day of the Lord will not come until the right time.

If you don't know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, this lesson has provided just a glimpse of the terrible judgment awaiting you. If you are alive during the Tribulation, you will happily follow the Antichrist to your utter damnation.

Do you want to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior? If so, please read the verses printed on the back of this book. Turn away from your sins and turn to Jesus. He will forgive you and save you. Call your Sunday School teacher or someone else you respect if you need help or have questions.

Project: When you hear news this week about disasters and calamities, thank God that He has all things under control. Be sure to come to Sunday School this Sunday.

Comfort and Confidence

We live in a world of uncertainty. Will I be able to find a job? Will I lose the job I currently have? Will my parents stay together or divorce one another? Are we heading toward World War III? Will the stock market go up or down? Will the doctor give me a good or bad report? Is anything stable? Does anyone really love me?

Yes, there are many uncertainties in our lives; but in the midst of them all, Christians can be comforted and gain confidence from God’s Word. This week’s lesson offers both.

2 Thess. 2:13 How did Paul feel toward the Thessalonian believers?

Paul loved the Thessalonians. This verse says God chose them “*from the beginning*” to three things:

1. “ _____ through
2. _____ of the Spirit and
3. _____ of the truth.”

2 Thess. 2:14 If you are chosen by God, then God “ _____ you” by the Gospel. When we are saved, we obtain “the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Remember that the Thessalonians to whom Paul wrote were enduring persecution. The sufferings we face here don’t even compare with the glory we experience in Christ (Rom. 8:18).

2 Thess. 2:15 What 2 things did Paul tell the Thessalonians to do?

1. _____
2. _____

2 Thess. 2:16 In this and the next verse Paul prayed for the Thessalonians. Note how he described the One to whom he prayed:

“Now our _____ Christ _____, and _____, even our _____, which hath _____ us, and hath given us everlasting _____ and good _____ through grace.”

2 Thess. 2:17 What did he ask the Lord to do for them?

The lost are appointed to delusion, judgment, and wrath (2 Thess. 2:10-12), but Christians are chosen, loved, saved, sanctified, and will be glorified. This truth should **comfort** us!

2 Thess. 3:1 Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for him. What specifically did he want them to pray?

Paul’s greatest concern was the spread of the Gospel. He didn’t ask them to pray for personal comfort, health, or wealth; rather, he wanted “*the Word of the Lord*” to “*have free course.*”

2 Thess. 3:2 What else did he ask them to pray for?

2 Thess. 3:3 The Lord is _____. Faithfulness is one of the foundational elements of God’s character. What two things did Paul say the Lord would do for the Thessalonians?

1. _____
2. _____

If you belong to Jesus, you can have **confidence** that the Lord will do those same things for you!

2 Thess. 3:4 What was Paul confident the Thessalonians were doing and would continue to do?

2 Thess. 3:5 “And the Lord _____ your hearts into the _____ of God, and into the _____ waiting for Christ.”

When we belong to Jesus Christ, the Lord directs our affections toward Him, and enables us to wait patiently for His return.

Concluding Thoughts: This is a world of fears, doubts, and uncertainties, but those who are living for Jesus can walk through this uncertain world with both **comfort** and **confidence**.

The Thessalonians were persecuted by the lost people around them (chapter 1), and they had been troubled by false doctrine about the Day of the Lord (chapter 2). In spite of these things, they could take comfort in the fact that they belonged to Jesus, and therefore continue to faithfully serve the Lord. They had confidence in the face of uncertainties because they knew the Lord to be faithful.

You, too, can have comfort and confidence in spite of the uncertainties of this world. If you are troubled, rest in the Lord. Confess your fears and doubts to Him and ask Him to comfort your heart. Ask Him to enable you to confidently face the future and faithfully serve him the rest of your life.

Thank the Lord that He has chosen you to be saved, sanctified, and to believe the truth. Thank Him that He called you and will glorify you. Thank God that He loves you and gives you everlasting consolation and hope. Thank Him for being faithful, and for enabling you to love Him and patiently wait for His return.

Talk to Him about these things right now.

Project: Memorize **2 Thessalonians 2:13**. Do the **Daily Bible Readings** every day this week, and come to Sunday School this Sunday.

Withdraw from the Disobedient

Sandy is not really a bad person, but some things about her are troubling. She seems to be in perfectly good health, but she doesn't have a regular job. She does a little bit of temporary work here and there, but she depends on government assistance for her living. She continually asks people at church for money.

Not only that, Sandy often meddles in other people's business. She always seems to know what's best for everyone else, and she can't keep a secret. Recently you talked to her about something she was doing that was a clear violation of scripture. Instead of receiving your corrective guidance, Sandy became angry and said she didn't care what the Bible said; she was going to do as she pleased.

Sandy is a member of your church and claims to be saved. What, if anything, should you do? How should you relate to her? In light of the fact that Jesus is coming back, what should you do?

2 Thess. 3:6 Paul gave the Thessalonians a clear command in the name of Jesus. What did he tell them?

2 Thess. 3:7 Paul told them to follow him (see also 1 Thess. 1:6). How did he behave among them?

2 Thess. 3:8 While he was in Thessalonica, Paul worked hard and provided for his needs (see also 1 Thess. 2:9).

2 Thess. 3:9 Why did he do this?

2 Thess. 3:10 Paul repeated a command he had given while he was in Thessalonica: "If any would not _____, neither should he _____." Christians should _____ to support themselves.

2 Thess. 3:11 What had Paul heard was happening at Thessalonica?

Those who were not working had become _____.
Read 1 Timothy 5:12-13 and 1 Peter 4:15 to learn more of what the Bible says about this behavior.

2 Thess. 3:12 What did Paul command these people to do?

Note that he used the strongest language (“*command and exhort*”) and called on the highest authority (“*our Lord Jesus Christ*”) in this instruction.

2 Thess. 3:13 “But ye, brethren, be not _____ in _____.” The work of the believer may be tiring, but we must not become weary of it.

2 Thess. 3:14 If anyone refuses to obey the Bible, we should “_____ that man, and have no _____ with him.” The purpose in our doing this is “that he may be _____.”

2 Thess. 3:15 Should we hate the disobedient brother and consider him our enemy?

How should we treat him?

The word **admonish** means to warn, reprove, and caution.

2 Thess. 3:16 It may be upsetting or troubling to withdraw from a disorderly brother or sister, but the Lord promises to give you _____. It is comforting to know that the Lord is “_____ you.”

2 Thess. 3:17 A forged letter containing false doctrine had previously deceived the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2:2), but Paul closed this letter in his own handwriting to prove that it could be trusted. Just as the Thessalonians could trust the truthfulness of this letter, we can trust the truthfulness of the entire Bible, because God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

2 Thess. 3:18 What is the last thing Paul prayed for them?

Concluding Thoughts: Do you remember Sandy, who you read about in the opening paragraphs of this lesson? Based on what you've learned in these verses, how should you relate to Sandy? Should you hate her or talk badly about her to everyone at church? On the other hand, should you ignore her behavior or spend a lot of time fellowshiping with her?

Do you know an unruly, disorderly person who claims to be a Christian? Do you know someone who refuses to work? Do you know a busybody? Do you know someone who refuses to obey the Bible? If so, you need to put the truths of this week's scripture to work in your relationship with that person.

Withdraw from that disorderly brother or sister, but don't treat him or her like an enemy. Be prepared to tell them, **from the Bible**, why you are withdrawing. Pray for that person. When they get ready to change their ways, be available to teach him or her how to live right, living for the return of Christ.

Project: Be sure to pick up a *Sunday School Member Quarterly* for the new quarter so you can begin the Daily Bible Reading Guide on Monday. Faithfully come to Sunday School every week. If you do, God will bless you by helping you understand His Word.