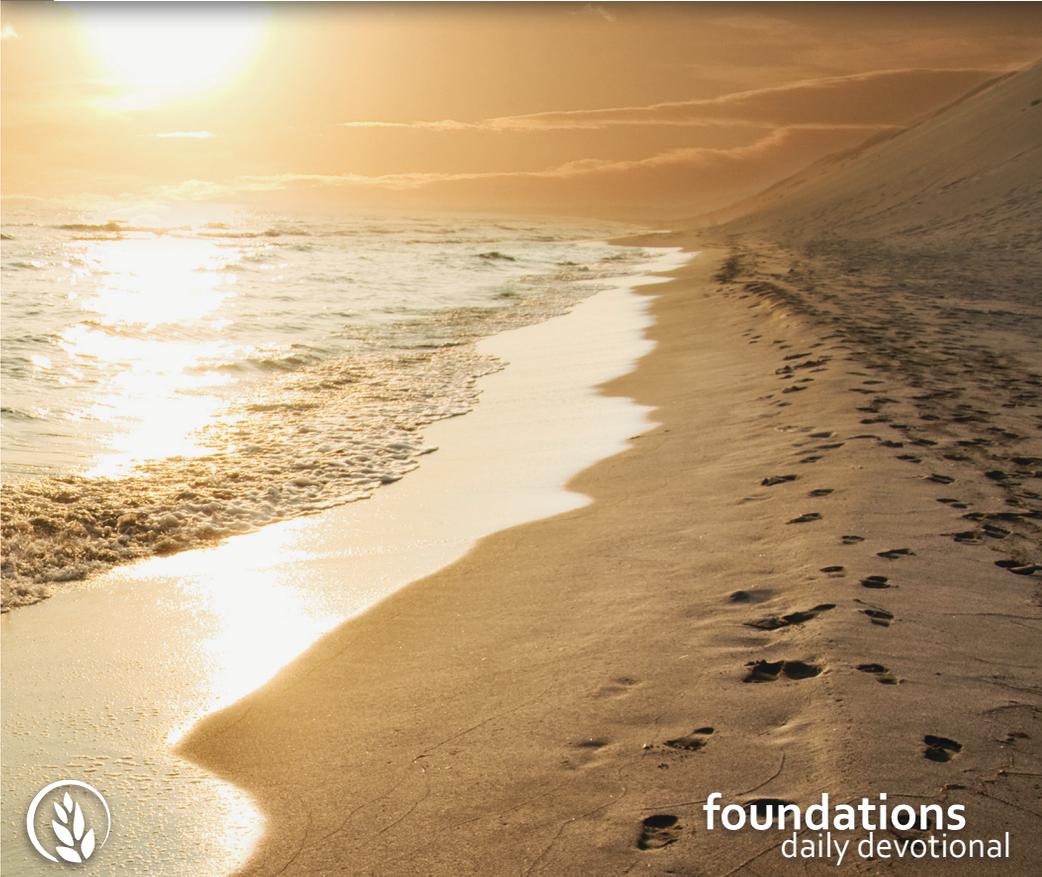


SOUTHLAND CHURCH

FIRST & SECOND LETTERS TO THE  
**THESSALONIANS**

*9 Day Devotional*



**foundations**  
daily devotional

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FIRST & SECOND LETTERS TO THE  
**THESSALONIANS**

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**foundations**  
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**DAY 1**

**READ:** If your Bible has introduction to the book of 1 Thessalonians, please read it.

**INTRODUCTION**

Paul is the primary author of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians. The letters indicate Silvanus and Timothy were with him, and that this message also contained greetings from them. The relationship Paul had with the church at Thessalonica started much earlier when he stayed in their city for a while. We don't know how long Paul had been there, but it seems to have been long enough to establish some kind of income, and to have guests come from far away to visit him. While he was there, he spread the gospel and started a church. Yet, even though he was there long enough to build some relationships and get things started, he left before the new believers had reached full maturity. It appears the church sent questions to Paul regarding things they didn't understand, or to confirm whether or not the teaching was true or false.

The believers in Thessalonica were most likely Gentile converts. If there were Jewish believers in the church, it would have been only a small number. In these letters Paul warns them about behaviours that are typical of Gentile and not Jewish living (sexual immorality, for example). Jews typically came from a lifestyle of obeying the law, not loose living. So the warnings indicate to us they were likely Gentiles.

These letters seem to serve a few purposes. It seems Paul was writing to answer questions they had sent him. They needed some theology cleared up and so he wrote back with answers. It also seems that Paul had learned of behavior that both concerned him and encouraged him. Paul wrote to teach, correct, warn and encourage.

The Christians in Thessalonica were also being persecuted. It was not an easy time to be a believer, and death permeated the thoughts of those left behind. Two of the big questions Paul deals with in these books are the question of death (what happens when we die) and the question of the second coming of Jesus (what happens if we don't die). The believers were mourning and suffering. It seems they wanted to have their minds and hearts firmly planted on the truth of eternity and the promise of Christ's return. It is to their credit that they searched for the answers to keep their minds and hearts focused on what is to come rather than be discouraged and weakened without the truth.

These letters answer those questions for us today as well. We can have our hope fixed on what is true. We can also be challenged by the same teaching these early church members needed. Many of us are Gentiles and come to our relationship with Christ with similar cultural (sinful) baggage that we need to be warned about and challenged to put aside. What a blessing God has given the church today through this letter written so long ago.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Ask the Lord to reveal to you how He wants to use this book in your life. Is it to warn? Teach? Correct? Encourage? Submit yourself to His plan and purpose as you go through this book. Ask Him to make you an eager and willing student of His ways.
2. What is a difficulty, struggle or loss you are dealing with right now? Ask the Lord to use the words of these letters to bring you renewed hope and endurance to keep up the good fight.

3. Spend some time thanking God for the spiritual teachers and leaders in your life that help you understand difficult theological ideas, answer your questions, and keep you accountable. Pray a prayer of blessing for your leaders.

## DAY 2

 **READ:** 1 Thessalonians 1

One thing can be said of Paul is that his main method of evangelism and discipleship was through relationship. Chapter 1 gives us a glimpse into the kind of relationship Paul had with the believers in Thessalonica. He had lived with them, worked with them, preached to them, and loved them. Not only did his relationship with them grow while he was with them, we see that his concern and love for them continued long after he wasn't with them anymore.

Paul could have thought of himself as their leader. He could have treated them like students. Both of those would have been totally appropriate because he was ministering to them. But he didn't. Paul had learned to love them. He was friends with them as well. To Paul, ministry was not separate from relationships. Relationships *were* his ministry.

Paul encourages them and gives them praise for having done well. He has heard that they are living the same way he did when he lived with them. They are imitating his lifestyle. He has gotten great reports back from people who know about these believers and he wants to let them know he's proud of them.

What a blessing it must have been for Paul and his missionary companions to hear about the faith of their new little church in Thessalonica. Not only had they witnessed the powerful conviction and salvation first hand, now they were hearing reports about it. What started as a powerful conversion was bearing the fruit of lifestyle change and even more evangelism.

The faith of the Thessalonians was powerful, authentic, and effective. Paul says their faith came with a conviction of the Holy Spirit. They didn't just 'slip' into faith, they were powerfully impacted by the Holy Spirit. Their faith was so authentic and permeated every part of their lives that they became examples to other believers. Their saving belief in Jesus meant they no longer worshipped idols and they proclaimed their message to others. The effects of their faith were reaching far and wide.

### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Take a few minutes to think about the people in your life you are already in relationships with (co-workers, neighbours, colleagues, family, etc.). How many of them are not believers? Ask the Lord to speak to you about building into these relationships with the purpose of demonstrating Christ to them. Ask Him to help you transform your view of ministry into one of relationships.
2. Ask the Lord to speak to you and encourage you with what you are doing well. Listen to Him speak words of life to you today. Write down what He says and thank Him for seeing the truth in your heart. Ask God what one thing you have changed or started or stopped since giving Him control of your life that is evidence of your authentic faith in Him.
3. Take time right now to ask the Lord to make you an effective witness in your circle of influence. Pray for courage to live according to His plan. Pray for a filling of His Spirit to give you motivation and love to impact others for Christ.

## DAY 3

 **READ:** 1 Thessalonians 2

This chapter is a fantastic example of how ministers of the gospel should live, act and work. We can take principles from Paul's excellent example of disciple-making.

**Principle #1: In order to have effective and lasting ministry, we must be appointed by God and do it to please Him only.** Paul says they were tested and approved by God. Their only motivation was to please Him. They were willing to withstand all kinds of persecution if it meant the Lord would be pleased. Paul was not interested in manipulating the circumstances, or using convincing words to increase the number of people who converted. His goal was to minister to them in such a way that God, after exposing his heart, would be completely pleased with him.

**Principle #2: Effective leadership comes from humble service.** Paul makes it clear that because God had appointed them as ministers they had every *right* to demand certain things from them. They were the leaders, after all! But they didn't. Instead, they humbled themselves to serve, nurture and tenderly lead them. Paul says they were gentle when they could have been demanding. This allowed Paul to build genuine, loving relationships with them. Then within the context of those relationships, and because of his authentic love toward them, he taught them how to love God and love others.

**Principle #3: Holy living is necessary for effective discipleship.** Paul is careful to point out that they had deliberately not been a burden to them while they were ministering the gospel. He made it clear how careful they had been to live holy and blameless lives as examples to them. They could encourage the new believers by showing them with their own good conduct how to live according to the new life within them. We cannot expect others to live to standards we ourselves are not willing to live to.

**Principle #4: It is good for us to be in ministry to earn a reward in heaven.** Paul explains in verses 19-20 that the people he has led to the Lord, and who have become faithful followers of Jesus will be the work he'll show to Jesus when he sees Him. He is fully aware that his reward will not be in businesses he founded (Paul made tents for a living), or buildings he constructed, or money he made. The only thing he knows he can boast to the Lord about is the lives of those he impacted for Christ. This was his whole motivation in ministry – to receive a crown, a reward, from the Lord. There is nothing wrong or selfish in working towards a reward in heaven. Rather, this is the very reason God gave told us there would be one – so we would work toward it.

### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. What ministry are you involved in right now? Are you involved because God called you to this or because you are pleasing people? Ask the Lord to speak to you about your motivation for ministry. Is He pleased? Is He asking you to make changes? Take some time to pray through this and ask for His next steps for you.
2. Ask the Lord to give you 2-3 practical things you can do to serve the people you are ministering to (this could be cell members, people at work, your children, or whoever God brings to mind). Make a plan to be obedient. Ask Jesus to fill you with love so your act of service would point them to Him instead of to you.
3. Ask Jesus if there is anything in your lifestyle, your language, your attitude and tone, or anything at all that could get in the way of others learning how to live a godly life in Christ. Confess any sin He points out. Ask Him to give you grace and courage to live a holy life that others can imitate.

4. Spend a few minutes listening to Jesus. Ask Him to speak to you about the rewards in heaven. Ask Him to create in your heart a deep desire to receive a reward from Him when you see Him face to face. Thank Him for how He rewards those who faithfully serve Him.

## DAY 4

 **READ:** 1 Thessalonians 3

We learn from the first few verses of this chapter that the Thessalonian believers were suffering persecution. When Paul had been with them persecution was not happening. But we learn in these verses that Paul had warned them it would happen. He had been worried when he hadn't heard from them for a while because he thought the persecution may have been too much for them, and that they had gone back to their old ways. He was more than thrilled to find out they had been strong in the face of suffering.

This idea of teaching new believers about suffering and persecution has been lost in our western church for many years. We have tried to sweeten the gospel by telling people how much better their lives will be with Christ. And it's true! Life is always better with Christ! However, we have cheapened the power of the Holy Spirit and reduced the benefits of salvation to what we can experience on this earth. If we followed the example of Paul, part of our message to those interested in the gospel would include the truth of suffering and persecution.

We would not hesitate to let them know they will face difficulty, possibly losing relationships, belongings, and being physically beaten. And we could do this easily because we can also tell them of the promise of heaven for those who endure. When we expect suffering, and have a plan to stay faithful by focusing on our eternal reward, any persecution that comes our way cannot sway us or make us falter. This is how Paul taught these believers when he was with them and it paid off! They stood strong when the winds of opposition hit them.

We see in Paul's words to the Thessalonians that he was also suffering. We don't know the full details, but we know Satan had thwarted him from leaving the area he was in, and that they were in "distress and affliction" (vs. 7). Paul tells the believers in his letter that the news of their endurance in the face of suffering helped bolster them in their difficult times. There is a sense of "if they can do it, I can do it" as well as a shared purpose and camaraderie across the miles. When the Body of Christ suffers in one place, the whole Body suffers. But in the same way, when the Body of Christ endures it brings joy and strength to the rest of the Body.

We can take this to heart today. There are believers across the globe suffering for their faith, being persecuted, beaten, threatened and abused. Christians are suffering simply for choosing Jesus. Maybe today they feel alone and cut off from the Body of Christ. We can bring them hope, joy and strength through our prayers, our letters, and our testimony.

## JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Are you ready to face suffering and persecution for the sake of Christ? Ask the Lord to speak to your heart about how to more fully prepare yourself to choose Him in the face of persecution. Ask Him to give you a driving passion to receive a reward in heaven for enduring to the end. Thank Him for providing all you need through the Holy Spirit to stay standing when enemies come against you.

2. Ask Jesus if you have in any way cheapened His salvation or devalued the eternal benefits of a relationship with Jesus when speaking with others. Ask Him to give you ideas and steps to sharing your hope for heaven with others even while you prepare for difficulty. Ask Him to plant such a deep longing in you for heaven that others would be attracted to heaven because of you.
3. Ask Jesus to bring to mind the name of a person or people group who are suffering today for the sake of Christ. Pray for believers who are being persecuted that they would stand strong, that the Holy Spirit would infuse them with a longing for heaven, and that they would receive encouragement from other believers. (If you would like to pray more specifically for persecuted believers please check out Voice of the Martyrs Canada at [www.persecution.net](http://www.persecution.net).)

## DAY 5

 **READ:** 1 Thessalonians 4

There are three main points Paul makes in this chapter. The first is the importance of living pure and holy lives, especially in the area of sexual purity. The second point Paul stresses is the importance of working hard and being independent. Finally, Paul explains what happens to those who die and what will happen to those who are still alive at the second coming of Christ.

The Thessalonian believers likely came from a culture and lifestyle that was sexually promiscuous. We know this from historical records, but Paul's gentle warning also confirms this. Paul encourages them by saying they are doing well and growing, but they need to do this more and more. He pushes them to a higher standard of holiness. He contrasts them to Gentiles who don't know God. Those who don't know God still live in bondage to sexual sin, so he challenges them to be different and live in the power of Christ. He gives them a stern warning. He reminds them that this is not a man-made 'rule' but rather a requirement God has placed on them, and to disobey could have eternal consequences. Sexual purity is a really big deal to Paul because it is a really big deal to God.

In regards to working hard, Paul encourages them regarding the growth he sees but insists they need to keep improving. He acknowledges that their love is growing and he is proud of them for that. However, it seems they are becoming dependent on non-believers for their food, shelter, and well-being. It's possible they had gotten caught up with ministry or relationships to the point that they were no longer working to support themselves. This puts a bad taste in the mouths of non-believers. Christians need to be hard working and dependent on God while using their gifts, talents, abilities and energy to provide what they need for themselves and others. The way we work and live is a powerful message to the non-believers around us as to the power of God in us. Paul warned the Thessalonians about that, and he is warning us as well.

Finally, in this chapter Paul takes a moment to answer a question that likely came to him from them through Timothy. They wanted to know what happens to believers after death. A common teaching in those days (much like today) is that death is the end of life, with nothing after death – it's just the end. Paul refutes that belief. Paul taught that death in Christ is as temporary as sleeping. It isn't the end. Those who die in Christ will be woken up with the voice of the Lord when He comes again. Paul encourages them with this. He wants them to know their efforts are not wasted. Death is not the end. There is reward and relationship after death. Our deaths are really an interruption in life, for a few shorts years between our death and our bodily resurrection we are held back from life. Those who escape death because they are still alive when Jesus returns will be caught up together with them. At the coming of Christ all who believe in Him will be gathered together, whether from life or from death. What a blessed hope and future!



**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Ask the Lord to speak to you about your sexual purity. Are you doing well? Is there an area of sexual impurity, no matter how small or hidden, that He wants to help you be victorious over? Confess sin if there is any. Ask Him to speak to you about the seriousness of sexual purity. Thank Him for His grace and help to overcome these temptations, sins, and habits.
2. Ask the Lord to speak to you about how well you are doing the following:
  - a. Working hard to provide for yourself using the gifts and talents He’s given you;
  - b. Depending on God to provide what you need and for all blessings; and
  - c. Being part of a community that helps support those who cannot support themselves.
3. Spend a few moments thinking about how your life would be different if you didn’t have heaven to look forward to. Thank the Lord that your life will never come to an end and you can spend eternity with Him if you have submitted to Him in this life. Thank Him for making even the toughest struggle, trial and persecution nothing in comparison to the beauty and joy of an eternity with Him.

**DAY 6**



**READ:** 1 Thessalonians 5

It would seem from the way chapter five starts that Paul is answering yet another question. The question might have been: How will we know when Jesus is coming back? Paul made it clear they were not to stress about this kind of stuff. He tells them those who don’t know will be caught unaware, the same way someone is caught when a thief comes to steal. But the Christians will know! It won’t be a surprise like a thief in the night. We can be prepared! Just like a pregnant woman knows approximately the time she will give birth, but not the exact day, we can watch for the signs around us and know that the time of Christ’s return is near.

Verses 12 through 22 are full of short, but powerful sentences. Each one is packed with instruction about how to live. One thing Paul says is to rejoice always and to give thanks in all circumstances. This can be misunderstood. Some have said this means to always be happy and exhibit joy no matter what. However, that’s contrary to Eccl. 3:4 which says there is: *“a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance”*. When we rejoice in happy circumstances, it’s easy! Nobody really has to encourage us. It’s when things are tough that rejoicing is hard, and so is giving thanks. However, Paul has just finished explaining that the dead are only temporarily sleeping (chapter 4). He’s also just said Jesus is coming back for us, and we can know the signs. When death strips us, we can rejoice not because of what death has done but because of what Jesus has promised. When circumstances are painful and tragic we give thanks that this world will soon end and Jesus is coming back to make things right. God wants us rooted in reality. If things are hard and painful, it is dishonest not to cry. But to ignore the reality and truth that death is no longer a permanent fixture in our lives, and to refuse to put our hope in Jesus and the eternity He promises, is a dangerous mistake. Amid the tears and pain we can both rejoice and give thanks honestly.



**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

Another set of verses to take note of is verses 20-21. Paul teaches not to despise or reject prophecies but to test everything. In our culture we have teachers who say to believe all prophecies ... no questions asked. Others teach God doesn’t speak through prophecy so we are to reject anything we are told is from the Lord. These are two extremes Paul succinctly handles in these two verses. First: don’t reject prophecies. If we do that, we are literally plugging our ears to hear the voice of God through others. Second: we are not to believe everything we hear, but rather we are to test it. We are not supposed to be lazy Christians. If someone prophesies or says “this is what the Lord says”, we are supposed to listen carefully, and then evaluate it, pray about it, and see if it fits with the whole of Scripture and godly counsel. We cannot leave the testing to others, we must be actively testing ourselves. To do this we must be familiar with God’s Word, regularly hearing His voice, and in close relationship with other believers.



**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Spend a few minutes thanking the Lord that He doesn’t purposely confuse us or make things hard for us. Thank Him for allowing us to know the signs of His second coming so we can be prepared. Take a few moments to ask Him to sharpen the eyes of your heart to see the signs of the times even more clearly as the day of His return approaches.
2. What is something you are experiencing now that is naturally a joyful thing? What are you struggling through? Ask the Lord to show you what you can be thankful for in each situation. Ask Him to give you a heart of rejoicing in the midst of both situations. Ask Him to create in you a heart that rejoices in the truth and hope of eternity.
3. Ask the Lord to help you evaluate your willingness and ability to accept prophecy and test it:
  - a. Ask Him where you fall on the spectrum of prophecy and if there are any improvements He’d like to see or if He’s happy with where you are.

<p><i>Hate prophecy and avoid it at all costs</i></p>	<p><i>Love prophecy and accept everything without testing</i></p>
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- b. Ask Him if He is pleased with how much time you are spending in the Word to become familiar with His character, His purposes, and His ways.
- c. Ask Him how you are doing in purposely listening for and hearing His voice. (Remember that obedience is part of hearing.)
- d. Ask Him whom in your circle of friends and acquaintances you could turn to for godly counsel.

2 *Thessalonians***DAY 7**

 **READ:** 2 Thessalonians 1, plus the introduction if your Bible has one.

This letter to the Thessalonians has a completely different tone than the first one did. Two significant things stand out. In the first letter, the believers seemed young in their faith. They were doing well but getting hung up on habitual sin that threatened to tear them down. In this letter, however, they are suffering persecution. They no longer have the option to be fickle about their faith.

The second significant thing we see in this letter is that the Thessalonians have been confused with some false teaching about the end times. This affects them in serious ways as we will see in a few days.

In chapter one Paul deals with their suffering. He is straightforward with how he speaks about suffering. He tells them their suffering is the very thing that proves they are worthy of the kingdom of God. This kind of teaching seems backward in our culture. Many popular preacher and authors talk about how God only wants us to be promoted and prosper. They talk about health and wealth and favour as if only this kind of blessing is from God. However, the blessing Paul talks about in this chapter is the blessing of suffering, and the blessing of God's justice. It would almost seem, according to verse 11, that suffering is part of the process God uses to help make us worthy to be His own. It purifies us, causes us to rely on God alone, and strips us of everything but the eternal hope of heaven and being in the presence of a glorious God. This is a good thing!

The eyes of the Thessalonian believers were set on eternity. This is why they could endure, and this is why Paul chooses to encourage them with reminders of God's justice and His heavenly glory. If they had instead measured their relationship with God based on financial income, lack of physical pain, material goods, high honor, or promotion, they would have failed miserably. But God had provided the teaching of Paul early in their conversion to Christianity to teach them and warn them that persecution was coming and to fix their eyes on eternity. This is why Paul is so pleased with them and why he encourages them the way he does.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Ask the Lord to expose your belief about suffering. Think about some of these questions and ask Him to speak to you about what's in your heart regarding them:
  - a. When others are suffering, or have been mistreated because of their faith, do I judge them in my heart?
  - b. When I am suffering in any way, do I complain or thank God for the opportunity to glorify Him in my suffering?
  - c. Have I come to expect that if the Lord really loves me He would give me what I want?
  - d. Do I equate a good relationship with God with prosperity, health and honor?
  - e. Jesus, what do you want to say to me about suffering?
2. How often do you think about heaven or spending eternity with Jesus? Ask the Lord to speak to you about your eternal perspective. Ask Him to grow your longing for heaven and to keep your heart and mind focused on what will last for eternity instead of just a few decades.

3. Take a few moments to pray for people you know are suffering today, whether due to life circumstances or for the sake of Christ. Ask God to give them a vision of heaven and His glory to help them endure to the end.

**DAY 8**

 **READ:** 2 Thessalonians 2

In this chapter Paul deals with the false teaching the Thessalonians have received about the end times. Perhaps someone had sent a letter forging Paul's name or style so they would believe it was him and obey it, or even a message sent by someone saying "Paul said..." No matter how the teaching came to them, they had accepted it. It appears the believers thought they were living in the last days. It is possible the persecution felt so severe it only made sense that Jesus would come back quickly and save them. However, Paul reminds them that he had previously taught them about the signs. He tells them again what to look for and points out these things hadn't happened yet. Not only had they not happened yet the world stage had not even been set to make them possible!

Paul gives them a long list of signs to look for. He also reminds them they have nothing to fear. Verse 6 says, "And you know what is restraining him [the man of lawlessness]..." This, of course, is God who is restraining him. Paul is reminding them that God is still in control, He still has all the power, and will continue to have the power. Even on the day the man of lawlessness is revealed it will be because of God's power and permission. How wonderful to know that the God who loves us so dearly that He paid His life for us, and then promised us the hope of eternity, is the One in control of every event leading up to and including the hard times to come at the end. This is quite an encouragement and fear-buster.

As the chapter wraps up Paul tells them to make sure they only receive the teaching he gives them either in person, by verbal message, or in writing. At first glance we might think this is self-honoring and boastful of Paul. However, it's not. The first century church didn't have the New Testament like we have it today. They couldn't go back and check what a certain verse or chapter said to make sure it lined up with the character and purposes of God like we can. Paul had been made an apostle. He had been given divine truth and was careful to teach everything he had been taught by the Lord. It is this calling and this appointment that gave Paul's words credibility, not his own opinion but God's direction. This is why he warns them against other teachers who have *not* seen the Lord or been appointed by Him. Paul knew if they kept their traditions the same, and listened to qualified teaching they would do well and be able to endure until the end.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Do you worry and fear about the last days? Ask the Lord to speak to your heart concerning the fact that He is in control of everything that will happen. Ask Him to give you words, thoughts, pictures or verses you can hold onto whenever the fear begins to rise in you to remind you that the God of LOVE is in control, even of the things that will happen in the last days.
2. Ask God to speak to you about any false teachers in your life. (It could be preachers, teachers, authors, even friends and family members who believe differently than you do.) Ask Him to point out the truth you need to get back on the path of solid teaching. Ask God if there is anything you have stopped doing (or started) because of false teaching. If there is, confess it and accept His loving forgiveness.

3. Spend time thanking the Lord for the freedom we have to own and read both the Old and New Testaments. Thank Him for speaking to us through the words of Scripture. Ask Him to speak to you about what you can do this week to make more time to spend in His Word.

## DAY 9

 **READ:** 2 Thessalonians 3

Paul requests the prayers of the Thessalonian believers. This is a beautifully humble act. We often think of Paul as a strong, harsh, bull-headed, stubborn, passionate man who can dive into situations without fear and who never fails – yet Paul is asking for prayer. He specifically asks that the Holy Spirit would go ahead of them and prepare the way so that more people would come to follow Jesus. He makes a little comment in verse 2. He says, “For not all have faith.” On one hand we might think, of course not! Yet, we know that many times wherever Paul preached many would turn to faith in Christ. Paul shows his heart here, and lets us know that sometimes he preaches and people still say no to Jesus. So he asks for prayer; not so he could be undefeated in his evangelism, but so more would live in freedom.

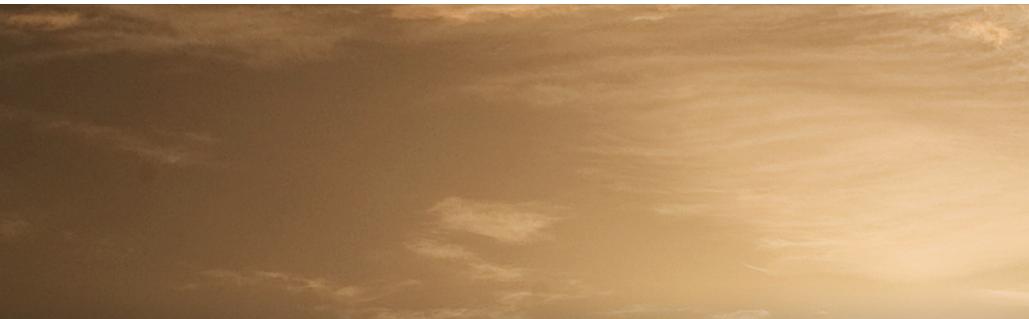
Starting in verse 6 Paul starts talking about laziness or being a busy body. It might seem out of place, but it makes complete sense! The Thessalonians were suffering persecution and believed Jesus was coming back any day. Why work if Jesus is coming back? The perspective seemed to be they would not bother storing up treasure on earth because Jesus was coming back. On one hand this is great news. The people truly believed. On the other hand, it gave a bad name to Christians. Because they weren’t working or taking care of their responsibilities, non-Christians were getting angry and offended at the gospel.

Paul makes it very clear: if you do not work, you do not eat. So unless Jesus is coming back before dinner, get to work! He does not go easy on those who are living off others. Whether we’re busy doing ‘good work’ or waiting for Jesus to come back, the bottom line is we need to work. He doesn’t just say ‘go to work’, either. He means we must actually work! Shoving paper around to look busy, visiting internet sites on company time, talking instead of working, or anything else we do at work that isn’t actually work is exactly what Paul is talking about and he says... stop it! Don’t be a busy body - be busy. Make yourself useful. Do the work you’ve been assigned. Earn your own keep.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Do you ever ask for prayer? Ask the Lord to speak to you about your willingness to humble yourself to ask for prayer, whether He’s proud of you or maybe there is some improvement needed. Ask the Lord to stretch you in this area of humbly asking for prayer. Ask Him to give you one prayer request you are to ask of your cell leader, pastor, or other spiritual leader. Be sure to follow through!
2. Ask the Holy Spirit if there is anything you are putting off that should be done today. Are there chores you have been avoiding or procrastinating on? Have you been asked to do something but you have conveniently forgotten or left it so long it’s not likely needed anymore? If He shows you something, confess it and ask Him for a heart that is willing to do today what can be done.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anything in your heart or life where you are lazy. Ask Him to reveal any ways you are cheating on your work by being busy but not working. If you work from home, ask Him to speak to you about things you need to get done

in a day to run your home and family. Are there things you avoid? If you work for someone else, ask Him to speak to you about whether or not you steal from your boss by not working during company hours. Confess anything that is sin. Thank God for His forgiveness. Make a commitment to glorify God with your work ethic.

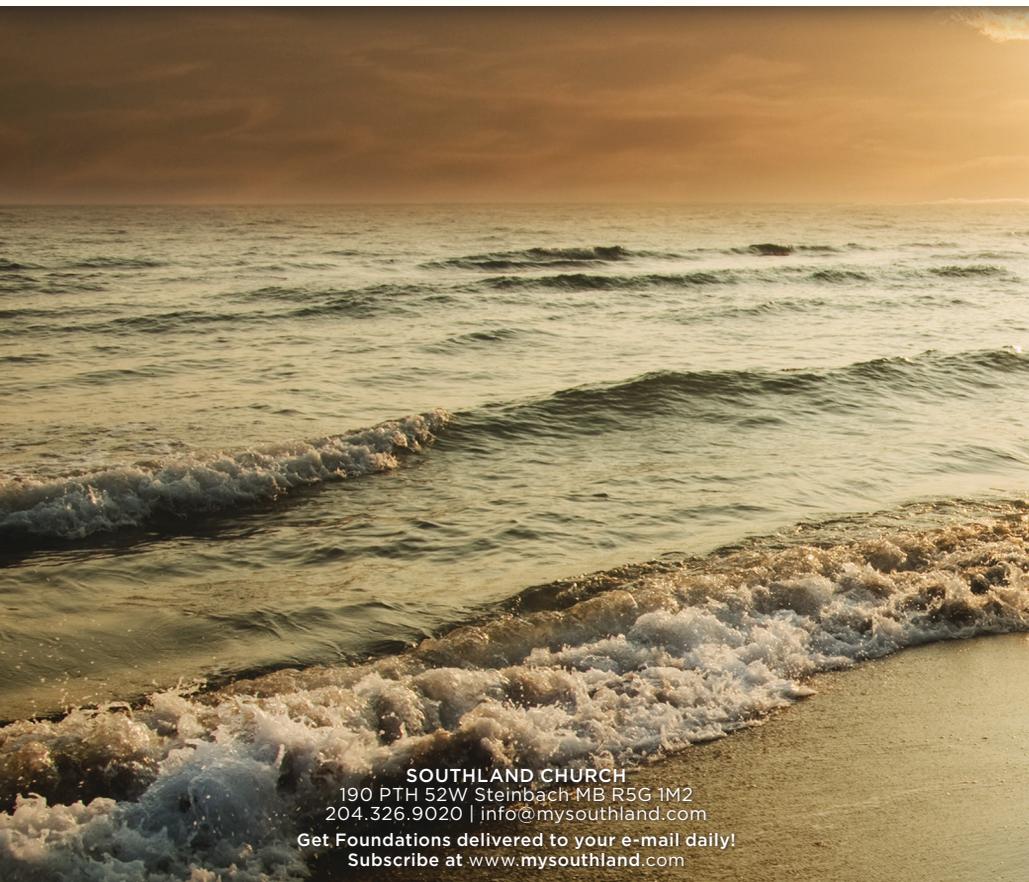


## First & Second Letters to the Thessalonians

Amidst highly practical teaching about how to live and work, Paul includes deep teachings about what happens when we die, what will happen at the second coming of Christ, and why suffering is actually a blessing from the Lord. Although these books are quite short, they are packed with teaching, encouragement, and challenge.

### 1 Thessalonians 4:1 (ESV)

*“Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.”*



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