



# STAND FIRM

1 THESSALONIANS

GUIDEBOOK

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Term 3 | 2025

**SUNDAY NIGHT  
JUL 20**

**Crosstalk  
Baptism**



**WEEK OF  
JUL 20-24**

**Growth Groups  
Term 3 Launch**



**SATURDAY  
JUL 26**

**Kids Leaders  
Training Day**



**SUNDAY  
JUL 27**

**Compassion  
Letter Writing**



**SUNDAY  
JULY 27**

**Startup**



**SATURDAY  
AUG 2**

**Women's  
GROW Conference**



**SUNDAY  
AUG 3**

**Free Community  
BBQ in the Park**



**TUESDAY NIGHTS  
AUG 5,12,19**

**Hope Explored**



**FRIDAY  
AUG 15**

**Youth  
Combo Night**



**SATURDAY  
AUG 16**

**Working Bee**



**SUNDAY NIGHT  
AUG 17**

**Crosstalk  
Money**



**WED AFTERNOONS  
SEP 10,17,24**

**Hope Explored**



**WEEKEND  
SEP 12-14**

**Church  
Weekend Away**



**Retirees Group**

**1st Wed in the Month**



**Young Adults All-In**

**1st Sun in the Month**



# **STAND FIRM**

**1 T H E S S A L O N I A N S**

# STAND FIRM

## 1 T H E S S A L O N I A N S

The setting to Paul's (along with Silas and Timothy's) letter to the newly established church in Thessalonica can be found in Paul's second missionary journey (See Acts 15:40-18:22). Paul and his fellow missionaries could only stay in Thessalonica for a very short time (**Read Acts 17:1-10**) and so we can only imagine the heart-felt concern they had for these new believers for whom they were waiting to hear news:

- This new church had already faced head-on persecution. So are they pressing on in faith?
- Given that Paul and his companions were forced to leave so quickly, have the Thessalonians fallen for false teaching and any criticisms levelled at Paul's ministry?
- Does this new church have real love for one another?
- Thessalonica was the second largest Roman town in Greece, located in the territory of Macedonia. Has this new church been influenced to return to old pagan ways?

This letter is full of affection and warmth from missionaries who have longed to receive news from Thessalonica. A key passage is:

*<sup>8</sup> For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. <sup>9</sup> How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? <sup>10</sup> Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.*

*<sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. <sup>12</sup> May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.*

1 Thessalonians 3:8-12

We're going to study 1 Thessalonians over the coming 7 weeks. This will take us right up to our Church Weekend Away, 12-14 September! The breakup will look like this:

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 .....	Gospel Power.....	p4
1 Thessalonians 2:1-16 .....	Gospel Love.....	p8
1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13.....	Gospel Priorities.....	p13
1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 .....	Gospel Life .....	p17
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 .....	Gospel Hope.....	p22
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 .....	Gospel Anticipation.....	p26
1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 .....	Gospel Church at Work .....	p30

In the following pages you'll find the Study Questions, but you'll also find at the end of each study some additional sharing opportunities where we will invite every person to bring their thoughts and ideas.



### **ENCOURAGE 1-ANOTHER WITH 1 THING!**

1 Thessalonians 4:18 and 5:11 tells us to 'encourage one another'. So at the end of a study there will be opportunity to share one thing in the group that stands out as an encouraging thing for you.

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### **ON MISSION**



1 Thessalonians is a letter from missionaries (Paul, Silas and Timothy) to recent converts to Christ, who with joy have gone on to share the gospel with others. So at the end of a study there will be opportunity to share about the mission opportunities God is giving you.

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### **GROWING TOGETHER**



Paul prayerfully desires for this new Thessalonian church to grow in faith, love, holiness and hope. So at the end of a study there will be opportunity to share one thing that challenges you – personally and for our church.

## STUDY 1

# GOSPEL POWER

## 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10

Can you think of a radical before/after event that took place in your life?

**READ 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10** In fact, read it twice to help you to observe and comprehend the meaning of the passage.

**1.** How is the warmth and affection from Paul, Silas and Timothy towards the Thessalonian Christians coming through in this passage?

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**2.** In v5, Paul says 'our gospel'. So we're all clear, spend some time as a group explaining the meaning of this gospel.

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**3.** Do you think it's possible to doubt that the gospel will have an impact in a person's life? How does v4-5 challenge us in our doubts?

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**4.** Paul will say more about this in chapter 2, but how does Paul describe his work as an apostle amongst the Thessalonians, v5-6? How does this challenge you in the Christian life and ministry you're involved in?

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**5.** This passage has lots of Paul's warm remembrance of how the Thessalonians were changed when the gospel took effect in their lives. How does this bring clarity for you (notice the 'before/after' language of v9-10) if a non-Christian friend asks you about the difference it makes in being a Christian?

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**6.** The Thessalonian Christians did not just keep the gospel as their own private prize! The Lord's message rang out and their faith in God become known everywhere! v8. Aren't these Thessalonian Christians so encouraging! How does this challenge you personally and how should it challenge us as a church?

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## ENCOURAGE 1-ANOTHER WITH 1 THING!

Name something that's encouraged you in God's word today & share.

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## ON MISSION

Who is in your life who needs the gospel?

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What's a step you can take so that you don't keep the gospel to yourself?

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## GIVE THANKS AND PRAY

*"We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers"*

1 Thessalonians 1:2

- Pray with thankfulness (and be specific!) for those who you know have been transformed because the gospel came to them.
- Pray for a heart and life that imitates the Thessalonians.
- Pray specifically for people – that the gospel would come to them, not just with words, but with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction from you!
- Pray for the Community BBQ coming up and Hope Explored

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**LET'S GET THE WORD OUT!**

# Free COMMUNITY BBQ LUNCH

**INVITE YOUR FRIENDS**

**SUNDAY 3 AUGUST**  
Dragonfly Park - Warner

**BURGERS • KIDS ACTIVITIES • LIVE MUSIC**



## FREE COMMUNITY BBQ

- Help on the Day!
- Get the Word out to Friends, Neighbours and Family
- Post in Social Media
- Participate with our Letterbox Drop

**HE HOPE EXPLORED**

**A 3 WEEK SERIES**  
**Starts Tuesday 5 August**  
**6:30pm - 8:30pm**



## HOPE EXPLORED

- Tuesday Evenings 5, 12 & 19 August
- Invite Your Friends, Neighbours and Family to Hope Explored

## STUDY 2

# GOSPEL LOVE

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-16

Have you ever been on the receiving end of a con or scam? How did it make you feel?

### READ 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-2:16

Even though our passage is 2:1-16, let's read from the start of Paul's letter, so that we can observe the flow and themes that keep popping up. In fact as you read through, see if you notice these themes/phrases:

- 'brothers and sisters'
- The idea of being a witness, either the Thessalonians as witnesses (look out for the repeating phrase 'you know' or 'you remember'), or mention of God as witness.
- Persecution and suffering

**1.** What's your sense of what Paul is seeking to communicate in this part (2v1-16) of his letter to the Thessalonian Christians?

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In the booklet introduction we were invited to read Acts 17:1-10 to understand Paul's experience in Thessalonica, but you might also like to refer back to Acts 16 to understand the suffering and 'outrageous treatment' 1 Thessalonians 2:2, they received previously in Philippi. At the end of Acts 16 we can read how despite being Roman citizens, Paul and Silas were publicly beaten and then jailed. This illegal treatment even shocked and embarrassed the local Roman magistrate!

**2.** In v1-7 there are a number of 'as you knows'. How would you summarise what Paul wants the Thessalonian Christians to know in these verses?

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**3.** How do you think Christian ministry in our setting can be done from a place of impure motives, in order to scam, or to fulfill greedy desires?

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**4.** What practical steps can we take to make sure we're doing Christian ministry, not to please people, but to please God?

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**5.** Paul uses traits of 'motherly' and 'fatherly' care for their children to describe his apostolic ministry amongst the Thessalonians. Identify in the passage what those traits are and then discuss what is the practical challenge this gives you for -

**a.** encouraging and supporting Christian leaders (later on, chapter 4:12 take us in this direction)

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**b.** your own approach to teaching ministry.

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6. Why is Paul so negative about the Jews? v14-16 How do the events of Acts 17:1-5, 10-13 help us in our answer to not come to the conclusion that Paul is encouraging antisemitism?

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**ENCOURAGE 1-ANOTHER WITH 1 THING!**

Name something that's encouraged you in God's word today & share.

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**ON MISSION**

Who is in your life who needs the gospel?

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For those who don't yet know Jesus, so often it will not just involve teaching, but sharing your life. What's a step you can take you display those 'motherly' and 'fatherly' traits?

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# GIVE THANKS AND PRAY

*"We also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God..." 1 Thessalonians 2:13*

- Pray with thankfulness (and be specific!) for those you know who have accepted the truth of the gospel as the word of God, as it really is.
- Pray for Christian leaders, and pray for your own approach to gospel ministry – that you would teach, and share your life.
- Pray specifically for people – that they would receive the gospel message as the word of God.
- Pray for the Community BBQ coming up and Hope Explored

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**LET'S GET THE WORD OUT!**

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## STUDY 3

# GOSPEL PRIORITIES

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-3:13

Has there ever been a time when you were waiting to hear something or see someone, and it was just taking so much time? How did you feel when you finally heard back about it?

### **READ FROM THE START OF 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1 BUT THEN FOCUS ON 2:17-3:13**

**1.** We've already been noticing various themes that are popping up within this book. Are there any themes that you're seeing continued in this passage, or new ones that are being introduced?

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**2.** What seems to be the main message that Paul is aiming to communicate within this section (2:17-3:13)?

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**3.** What was Paul's purpose in sending Timothy to the Thessalonian Christians? Why couldn't he come himself?

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**4.** What are some ways that we can be "strengthening and encouraging each other in our faith", just as Timothy was encouraging the church in Thessalonica when he went to them?

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**5.** Love is a theme that is constantly reappearing throughout this letter. We've seen it back in chapter 1, and we'll be looking at it more in next week's study as well. In verses 11-13, how is Paul speaking about both his love for them, and their love for each other?.

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**6.** How would you summarise Paul's priorities for the Thessalonian Christians and how should those priorities be seen in your life?

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## **GROWING TOGETHER**

Paul is prayerful to see others grow in love and faith – because he can't be with them. But for our church family who we are with, what will it mean for you to seek growth in faith and love for others?

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## ON MISSION

What are ways that we can be helping to grow others in Christ, even if we ourselves aren't there physically?

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## GIVE THANKS AND PRAY

*"Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you..."* 1 Thessalonians 3:11

- We can feel hesitant in praying specifically for each other, for our spiritual growth. But pray for each other within your growth group – that you would grow in faith and love.
- Pray that we would live out priorities in seeking spiritual growth in others.
- Jared & Verena Bradley (Noah & Samuel) are doing gospel ministry in Germany. They are physically distant from us, but let's pray for their ministry – that God would be at work through them – that many more people will come to Jesus and they would grow in faith and love.
- Give thanks for the keenness there is for the word to be spread to the people of Vanuatu. Pray for Tim Zylstra - that as he and the team work together to translate the Bible – that it would be a faithful translation, and that through it, many will be able to come to faith in Christ and grow in Him.
- Pray for Hope Explored and that God would use our efforts with the Community BBQ.

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# Weekend Away

**SEPTEMBER 12-14**

MOUNT TAMBORINE



## WEEKEND AWAY

- Don't Miss Out!
- Registrations are due by Sunday 24 August.



## WORKING BEE

- There are many ways you can lend a hand on the morning!
- Please join in - sign up online or on Sunday.

## STUDY 4

# GOSPEL LIFE

## 1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

Have you ever had an experience where you've become good at something, but you're still not satisfied and want to get even better? Share a story.

### READ 1 THESSALONIANS 4: 1-12

**1.** Based off Paul's words so far in the letter (Chapters 1-3), would you say that the Thessalonian church has been doing well? What are some verses that show this?

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**2.** Paul says to the Thessalonian church that it is God's will that we should be "sanctified" (v3). What do you think this term means and what implications does it have for us as Christians?

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*Given the subject matter, feel free to divide the group so it can be a discussion amongst the men and women.*

**3.** The apostle Paul instructs Christians to be different to the 'pagans' which in that context was the Gentile Graeco-Roman culture around. How can we go about answering these claims and questions that can come from our culture:

**a.** Christianity is obviously negative about sex and pleasure.

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**b.** It's ok to have sex in a safe and loving relationship. Isn't God a God of love?

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**c.** It's too unrealistic and too restrictive to have to wait until marriage.

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**4.** How do we help one another to be holy in the area of sexual morality?

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**5.** Paul's instruction to 'love one another more and more' (v. 10) is in some ways a repeat of his previous word about 'more and more' in v1! So there's a thankful encouragement in these words but also a real spur-on too! We shouldn't be simply satisfied or content with our current way of loving one another. What can we do to better love others?

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**6.** Earlier in the letter, Paul makes mention of how in his previous visit to the Thessalonians, they worked "night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone" whilst sharing the gospel with the Thessalonian church (2v9). In the final part of this letter, Paul encourages the Thessalonian church to mind their own business and work with their hands (v11). Do you think this means we're all supposed to be tradies? Why/Why not? Why should we value a good work ethic or proactiveness in working?

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## **GROWING TOGETHER**

Paul is prayerful to see others grow in love and faith – because he can't be with them. But for our church family who we are with, what will it mean for you to seek growth in faith and love for others?

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## **GIVE THANKS AND PRAY**

*"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones." 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13*

- Give thanks for all the signs of God working in the lives of people at Christ Central – that we're striving to live a holy life pleasing to God – in how we love one another, and in sexual purity too.
- Pray that we would not be simply satisfied, but knowing our Lord Jesus,

we would seek to love one another more and more, and pray that we'd be practical and real in our expressions of love for each other.

- Pray that we would not be taken in by the surrounding culture's teaching on sex and sexuality (which is powerful and pervasive), but instead we'd pursue a holy life that is pleasing to our Lord.

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**crosstalk**

# MAKING MONEY *and* FOLLOWING CHRIST

Sunday 17 August 5:30pm

DINNER | TALK | Q&A

**Guest Speaker - Mike Dogger**



## **CROSSTALK - MAKING MONEY & FOLLOWING CHRIST**

- Sunday Evening 17 August
- Speaker: Mike Dogger



## **WORKING BEE - THIS SATURDAY**

- There are many ways you can lend a hand on the morning!
- Please join in - sign up online or on Sunday.

## STUDY 5

# GOSPEL HOPE

## 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

There's no point being theoretical as we discuss a passage that speaks of death, grief and hope. If it's possible, perhaps you could start by sharing your own personal experiences of grief and loss. In those experiences, did you find any responses or messages from people as being particularly helpful, and were there any responses or messages that you found unhelpful?

**READ 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18** In fact, read it twice to help you to observe and comprehend the meaning of the passage.

**1.** Paul refers to 'sleep' a number of times in verses 13-15. What is it about death that means we can think of it as 'sleep'?

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It's worth noting that it's not only the apostle Paul who speaks about death as sleep. Jesus said, "*Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.*" Also see Daniel 12:2-3.

**2.** Paul was writing to Christians living within a surrounding culture that had their own approach to 'the afterlife' and how they would give comfort to each other. What would you say is the predominant approach in our culture and how does that compare to the truth of verse 14?

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**3.** This passage has three instances of 'together with...' – in verses 14 and 17. What is the message of hope that these 'withs' hold for us?

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**4.** Vivid imagery is given in verses 16-17 regarding the coming of Jesus. What do these images communicate to us?

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This passage certainly adds to the eschatological (end times) picture that we have through various parts of the bible including Matthew 24, 1 Corinthians 15, and Revelation. In John Stott's commentary on 1 Thessalonians, he has these helpful words as we seek to understand these words of 1 Thessalonians 4:

*Paul has been content to refer in the barest, briefest way to the four great eschatological events which we have called the Return, the Resurrection, the Rapture and the Reunion. How are we in the twentieth century to react to his teaching which come to us from the first? We must resist three temptations. First, we have no liberty to embroider his instruction with fanciful speculations of our own, or even to stretch the text beyond what the apostle intended to say....Secondly, we must resist the temptation of sophisticated 'modernists' to de-bunk Paul, to dismiss him as a child of his age, to deny that he was an inspired apostle...Thirdly, we must avoid the total literalism which denies that the passage contains any figures of speech at all... For the sleep of the dead, the spatial 'descent' of the Lord, the archangel's voice and the trumpet blast, the clouds and the air all belong to the realm of symbolic and apocalyptic imagery. Resisting these three temptations, we will be wise to combine affirmation (we are eagerly expecting a cosmic event which will include a personal, visible appearing of Jesus Christ and the gathering to him of all his people, whether dead or alive at the time) with agnosticism about the full reality behind the imagery.*

John Stott 'The Message of Thessalonians', p105

**5.** As we come to tremendously sad experiences of spending time with loved ones who are facing their death, what can we do?

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**6.** What do you want to see happen at your own funeral?

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### **ENCOURAGE 1-ANOTHER WITH 1 THING!**

We have the instruction in 4:18! Share something that's encouraged you in God's word today.

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### **ON MISSION**

Who is in your life who needs to find this sure hope in the face of death?

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# GIVE THANKS AND PRAY

*And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone...Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances..." 1 Thessalonians 5:14-18*

- Pray for the knowledge of real hope to come to Christian brothers and sisters you know are grieving.
- Pray specifically for people who are facing struggle and grief who are not yet Christian- that they would come to know the hope that's found in Jesus.
- This has been the last week of Hope Explored! Pray for all those who came throughout the 3 weeks – that they would come to faith in Jesus and have real hope.

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## STUDY 6

# GOSPEL ANTICIPATION

## 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11

Have you ever had the experience of being taken completely by surprise because you forgot about a significant event?

### READ 1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-5:11

Our focus will be 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, but let's read wider than that to see it in context.

**1.** In 5v1-3, what's the point that Paul is making about the coming of our Lord Jesus?

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**2.** What do you think is conveyed in the two separate metaphors that Paul uses - 'a thief in the night' and 'labour pains on a pregnant woman'?

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It's worth noting that this is not the first time a question about timing has been asked or the metaphor of a thief in the night has been used. Jesus said: *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."* Matthew 24:42-44

**3.** It seems that the apostle Paul's concern is not 'timing' but 'readiness'. What's the picture we're given in v4-8 of being ready for the coming of Jesus?

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**4.** Is Paul meaning 'awake and sober' v6 in a literal sense? Explain.

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**5.** How has the message of 1 Thessalonians already helped us to see what it means to be children - not of the night and darkness, but of the light and of the day?

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**6.** Warrior language isn't unusual in the New Testament eg. Romans 13:12 and Ephesians 6:10-18. Why is it appropriate to bring together the Christian virtues of faith, love and hope (and Paul referred to these back in 1:3) in such a way in 5v8?

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**7.** God's wrath is a reality that has kept coming up in this letter – 1v10 and 2v16. And we see Paul speak of it again in 5v9. So how are the words of v9-10 a word of great comfort for us who are in Christ Jesus?

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## ENCOURAGE 1-ANOTHER WITH 1 THING!

We have that instruction in 5:11! Share something that's encouraged you in God's word today.

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## ON MISSION

Through Jesus' death, we're saved from God's wrath. That's a confronting thing, but herein lies a key truth of the good news of Jesus. Who is in your life who needs to receive salvation through Jesus?

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## GIVE THANKS AND PRAY

*"We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."*

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

- Give thanks to God that he has not appointed us to suffer wrath, but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us.
- Pray for each other – that we would live soberly, as people of the light. Pray that we would put on faith, love and hope.
- Pray specifically for people – that they would receive salvation through Jesus and so be ready on the day of His future coming.
- Pray for the day-time Hope Explored series coming up.



## **HOPE EXPLORED**

This is our day-time edition of Hope Explored. Whether a retired person, or someone who has flexibility during the day, is there someone you could invite to our day-time Hope Explored?

## STUDY 7

# GOSPEL CHURCH AT WORK

## 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28

Do you have a 'favourite' or 'least favourite' part of our Sunday gatherings? Explain.

We come to our final study in Paul's letter to the Thessalonian church, but let's finish by reading the first and last part of this letter.

### READ 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10 & 5:12-28.

**1.** In his final part of the letter, Paul addresses the Thessalonian Christians as 'brothers and sisters'. In fact he refers to them in this way 16 times throughout the letter (!) but what is it about this final part of the letter (5:12-28) that has family characteristics to it?

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**2.** In verses 12-13 Paul speaks about our response to leaders within God's church. We have words there like '*acknowledge/give recognition*' and '*hold them in the highest regard in love*'. Do you think these instructions go against cultural things that shape us? What do you think it would look like to live this out?

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**3.** How could these instructions be abused by church leaders?

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**4.** The various 'punchy' instructions in verses 14-15 show us that it's not just leaders who have the role for growth and encouragement, but it's for the whole church. Which of these instructions seem most relevant for you in the relationships you're currently in with fellow Christians?

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**5.** Verses 16-22 contain more of these short and sharp instructions. It's worth noting that they're given in a plural form which may suggest they relate to the times when church gathers together. Which of these instructions most personally challenges you as you approach taking an active role in our Sunday gatherings?

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**6.** In terms of our own understanding, the passage we probably struggle with the most is verses 19-21. Discuss it as a group, but if we focus on the teaching to 'test', how do the following passages give us clear guidance for what our testing should include:

**Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1-3; Galatians 1:6-9; Matthew 7:15-20**

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**7.** A theme that has come through the letter of 1 Thessalonians is the need to 'stand firm' (3v8). We need to stand firm in *faith, love* and *hope*. What comfort and challenge do we find in Paul's parting words of verses 23-28?

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## GROWING TOGETHER

In these final instructions from the apostle Paul to the Thessalonian Christians, what is one challenge that has stood out for you as you think about our life together as God's church?

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## GIVE THANKS AND PRAY

*"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23*

- Pray for our church leaders.
- Pray that we'd be like a loving family -appropriately warning, comforting and helping each other.
- Pray that our Sunday gatherings would honour our Lord Jesus as we together do all that God's word tells us to do.
- As we finish off our study series in 1 Thessalonians, end with Spirit-filled praise for our God of peace who will keep us, and express expectation for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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**CHRIST CENTRAL**