



# EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

## Personal Study Guide

Spring 2022 | CSB



SAID

wake  
with him.  
es togeth-  
also ye do.

### OURSELVES

brethren, <sup>16</sup>to know  
you, and are over-  
admonish you;  
them very highly in  
s sake. *And be at peace*

<sup>17</sup>Rejoice evermore.  
hort you, brethren, <sup>18</sup>warn  
unruly, <sup>19</sup>comfort the feeble-  
support the weak, <sup>20</sup>be patient  
men.

that none render evil for evil unto  
an; but ever <sup>21</sup>follow that which is  
both among yourselves, and to all

<sup>22</sup>Rejoice evermore.  
Pray without ceasing.

<sup>23</sup>In every thing give thanks: for this  
is the will of God in Christ Jesus concern-  
ing you.

others; <sup>24</sup>Quench not the Spirit.  
<sup>25</sup>Despise not prophesyings.

the night;  
drunken in  
is good.

<sup>26</sup>Abstain from all appearance of evil.

### FINAL EXHORTATIONS

<sup>27</sup>And <sup>28</sup>on the very God of peace <sup>29</sup>sanctify  
you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit  
and soul and body <sup>30</sup>be preserved blameless  
unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4:4 <sup>15</sup>5:17 Luke 18:1; 21:36; Rom 12:12; Eph 6:16; Col 4:2; 1 Pet 4:7 <sup>16</sup>5:18 1 Ths 5:20; Col 3:17 <sup>19</sup>5:19 Eph 4:30; 1 Tim  
6; cp. 1 Cor 14:30 <sup>20</sup>5:20 1 Cor 14:139 <sup>21</sup>5:21 1 Cor 2:11; 1 John 4:3 <sup>22</sup>1 Ths 4:3 <sup>23</sup>5:22 1 Ths 5:432 <sup>24</sup>5:23 1 Ths 4:9  
<sup>25</sup>1 Ths 5:13 <sup>26</sup>1 Cor 7:8

coming are caught up (Ck bar-  
a clouds to meet the Lord in the  
term "rapture" is derived from rap-  
in the modern state of Israel. Just before  
the day of the Lord when people think they  
have this peace, sudden destruction will  
Christians will be kept out  
hour of testing (Rev. 3:10)  
5:10 See note at vv. 4-8.

U N D E R S T A N D

E X P L O R E

A P P L Y

# 1,2 Thessalonians



# THE BEST ADVICE

If you've ever wondered how to fix something, you really don't have to look very far for help. The internet is filled with videos that show how to repair or replace almost anything. Need to replace a leaky faucet? There are videos for that. Want to install a new radio in your car? Experts can show you how it's done. Whatever your challenge, help is just a click away.

In his Letters to the Thessalonians, Paul offered plenty of solid advice for living as a follower of Christ. He talked about dealing with persecution, handling false teachers, and preparing for the return of Jesus. He reminded his readers to love one another and to live in purity. And, unlike some advice out there, the apostle's words were totally reliable and trustworthy.

But for all of Paul's great advice, he knew one thing was more important than anything else. None of his lessons would mean a thing outside a personal relationship with Jesus. Without Christ, the Thessalonians would simply be going through the motions spiritually. That's because faith is not a "do it yourself" project.

All of this points to our own need for Jesus and the life He offers. We're all broken by sin, and He is the only One who can repair that damage. He wants us to accept His gift of salvation, and that's the best advice we could ever receive.

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning away from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus Christ as God's Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: "Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In Jesus's name I pray, amen."

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After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

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\*Evangelistic Emphasis

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*Explore the Bible: Adult Personal Study Guide CSB* (ISSN 2330-9539; Item 005573495) is published quarterly by Lifeway Christian Resources, One Lifeway Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234, Ben Mandrell, President. © 2021 Lifeway Christian Resources.

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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. Read Lifeway's full doctrinal guideline online at [lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline](http://lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline). The Key Doctrine statements in this study guide are adapted from these guidelines.

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Explore the Bible  
Adult Personal Study Guide  
Spring 2022  
Volume 8, Number 3

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Printed in the United States  
of America

# FROM THE TEAM LEADER

Focus. We live in a world filled with chatter and distractions. Both have been present throughout history, getting repackaged in different ways for each generation. The noise of the day is one tool that Satan uses to turn our focus away from Jesus and stunt our spiritual growth.

The believers in Thessalonica needed to focus on the truth. They faced persecution and false teachers, but thankfully these distractions had not gotten in the way of their devotion to Christ and to one another. Paul also reminded the Thessalonians that the return of Jesus should cause them to live in such a way that they would honor Him, even in persecution.

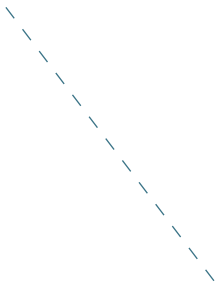
In our culture, we can easily become distracted by the noise of a lost and fallen world. We need to not allow that noise to silence us or discourage us. We serve the risen Savior who is coming back to take us home. Our lives should be a celebration of that reality, and our future should give us the confidence to stand for Jesus in this world right now.

As we study Paul’s Letters to the Thessalonians, we will discover that keeping our focus on Jesus and encouraging others to do the same will help us stand ready for the return of Jesus and will equip us to point others toward Him.

In His service,

**G. Dwayne McCrary**

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# WORD WISE

**Terms listed here are identified in the Bible commentary with a dot (•).**

**Achaia** [uh KAY yuh]—Roman province in the southern part of Greece, including Athens (Acts 17:16-33) and Corinth (Acts 18:27-28), the administrative center.

**apostasy**—the act of straying from what one has previously believed. The term (*apostasias*) was used to describe a political uprising as well as spiritual infidelity. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Paul taught that apostasy would precede the day of the Lord.

**archangel**—from the Greek *archangelos*, literally “chief angel” or “first angel.” The term appears twice in the Bible: in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 the voice of the archangel will accompany Christ’s return; in Jude 9 Michael the archangel disputed with the devil in an argument about Moses’s body.

**day of the Lord**—the day of Christ’s final victory (1 Thess. 5:2). The term carries the idea of judgment but also serves as an assurance of His blessing on believers.

**Macedonia** [MASS uh DOH nih uh]—a Roman province in the northern half of Greece (Acts 16:9-10). Thessalonica was its largest city and capital of the province.

**man of lawlessness**—According to 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4,9-12, the man of lawlessness is the ultimate opponent of Christ who will actively try to draw people away from following God and make them his followers instead. Many scholars equate him with the antichrist in 1 John 2:18.

**Philippi** [FIH lih pigh]—city in the province of Macedonia. Paul’s missionary work in Philippi is recorded in Acts 16:11-40. Persecution in Philippi resulted in Paul’s going to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1).

**Silas; Silvanus** [SIGH luhs; sil VAY nuhs]—a leader in the Jerusalem church (2 Cor. 1:19) who accompanied Paul on missionary journeys (Acts 15:40-41; 16:19-24). He joined Paul in writing the Thessalonian letters (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1).

**Timothy**—a friend and coworker of Paul (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; 4:9). He is listed with Paul as co-writer of six letters (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Philem. 1).



# BIBLE READING PLAN

## MARCH

- ☐ 1. 1 Thess. 1:1-2
- ☐ 2. 1 Thess. 1:3
- ☐ 3. 1 Thess. 1:4
- ☐ 4. 1 Thess. 1:5
- ☐ 5. 1 Thess. 1:6-7
- ☐ 6. 1 Thess. 1:8a
- ☐ 7. 1 Thess. 1:8b-10
- ☐ 8. 1 Thess. 2:1-2
- ☐ 9. 1 Thess. 2:3-4
- ☐ 10. 1 Thess. 2:5-6
- ☐ 11. 1 Thess. 2:7-8
- ☐ 12. 1 Thess. 2:9
- ☐ 13. 1 Thess. 2:10
- ☐ 14. 1 Thess. 2:11-12
- ☐ 15. 1 Thess. 2:13
- ☐ 16. 1 Thess. 2:14-15a
- ☐ 17. 1 Thess. 2:15b-16
- ☐ 18. 1 Thess. 2:17-18
- ☐ 19. 1 Thess. 2:19-20
- ☐ 20. 1 Thess. 3:1-3
- ☐ 21. 1 Thess. 3:4-5
- ☐ 22. 1 Thess. 3:6-7
- ☐ 23. 1 Thess. 3:8
- ☐ 24. 1 Thess. 3:9-10
- ☐ 25. 1 Thess. 3:11
- ☐ 26. 1 Thess. 3:12
- ☐ 27. 1 Thess. 3:13
- ☐ 28. 1 Thess. 4:1
- ☐ 29. 1 Thess. 4:2
- ☐ 30. 1 Thess. 4:3
- ☐ 31. 1 Thess. 4:4-5

## APRIL

- ☐ 1. 1 Thess. 4:6
- ☐ 2. 1 Thess. 4:7
- ☐ 3. 1 Thess. 4:8
- ☐ 4. 1 Thess. 4:9-10a
- ☐ 5. 1 Thess. 4:10b-12
- ☐ 6. 1 Thess. 4:13
- ☐ 7. 1 Thess. 4:14
- ☐ 8. 1 Thess. 4:15
- ☐ 9. 1 Thess. 4:16
- ☐ 10. 1 Thess. 4:17
- ☐ 11. 1 Thess. 4:18
- ☐ 12. 1 Thess. 5:1
- ☐ 13. 1 Thess. 5:2
- ☐ 14. 1 Thess. 5:3
- ☐ 15. 1 Thess. 5:4
- ☐ 16. 1 Thess. 5:5
- ☐ 17. 1 Thess. 5:6
- ☐ 18. 1 Thess. 5:7-8
- ☐ 19. 1 Thess. 5:9-10
- ☐ 20. 1 Thess. 5:11
- ☐ 21. 1 Thess. 5:12-13
- ☐ 22. 1 Thess. 5:14
- ☐ 23. 1 Thess. 5:15
- ☐ 24. 1 Thess. 5:16-18
- ☐ 25. 1 Thess. 5:19
- ☐ 26. 1 Thess. 5:20-21
- ☐ 27. 1 Thess. 5:22
- ☐ 28. 1 Thess. 5:23
- ☐ 29. 1 Thess. 5:24
- ☐ 30. 1 Thess. 5:25

## MAY

- ☐ 1. 1 Thess. 5:26-28
- ☐ 2. 2 Thess. 1:1-2
- ☐ 3. 2 Thess. 1:3
- ☐ 4. 2 Thess. 1:4
- ☐ 5. 2 Thess. 1:5-7a
- ☐ 6. 2 Thess. 1:7b-8
- ☐ 7. 2 Thess. 1:9-10
- ☐ 8. 2 Thess. 1:11-12
- ☐ 9. 2 Thess. 2:1-2
- ☐ 10. 2 Thess. 2:3-4
- ☐ 11. 2 Thess. 2:5-6
- ☐ 12. 2 Thess. 2:7-8
- ☐ 13. 2 Thess. 2:9-10
- ☐ 14. 2 Thess. 2:11-12
- ☐ 15. 2 Thess. 2:13
- ☐ 16. 2 Thess. 2:14
- ☐ 17. 2 Thess. 2:15
- ☐ 18. 2 Thess. 2:16-17
- ☐ 19. 2 Thess. 3:1-2
- ☐ 20. 2 Thess. 3:3
- ☐ 21. 2 Thess. 3:4
- ☐ 22. 2 Thess. 3:5
- ☐ 23. 2 Thess. 3:6
- ☐ 24. 2 Thess. 3:7-8
- ☐ 25. 2 Thess. 3:9
- ☐ 26. 2 Thess. 3:10-11
- ☐ 27. 2 Thess. 3:12
- ☐ 28. 2 Thess. 3:13
- ☐ 29. 2 Thess. 3:14-15
- ☐ 30. 2 Thess. 3:16
- ☐ 31. 2 Thess. 3:17-18

# INTRODUCTION

In First and Second Thessalonians, we are introduced to a trio of missionaries—Paul and his coworkers, Timothy and Silas. Their concern for the church is evident in their encouragement of the believers in Thessalonica.

In First Thessalonians we learn that the church was experiencing persecution. Yet this did not deter the congregation from sacrificially loving one another and others. Their sacrificial love was of such impact that those outside of their region heard of it and were influenced by it. We also see the heart of a pastor in that Paul encouraged the church in the midst of the struggle. Some people had entered the fellowship and were teaching false doctrine. Paul was unwilling to sit back and allow this to happen. Instead, he accurately taught truth to strengthen the congregation in the midst of the struggle.

Second Thessalonians centers primarily on the day of the Lord and the events surrounding Christ's return. The apostle could not allow false teaching to stand, and he reminded the church about events related to Christ's return. Paul used this as an opportunity to encourage the church to stand firm in God's Word. We also see a consistent theme of missionaries and the church actively spreading God's Word. Neither group would allow difficult circumstances to hinder them from faithfully living and sharing the gospel message.

## **Themes in 1 Thessalonians**

- A church can flourish and faithfully demonstrate love in the midst of persecution.
- God's leaders are called to faithfully share His message with pure motives.
- It is God's will for all believers to be sanctified through obediently living out His commands.
- The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night; therefore, we must be ready.

## **Themes in 2 Thessalonians**

- God's people will experience suffering in this world and God's glory throughout eternity.
- The man of lawlessness will precede the return of Christ.
- God's people are to faithfully share the gospel and serve Him until the return of Christ.



# OUTLINES

## 1 THESSALONIANS

- I.** Greeting (1:1)
- II.** Commendation for the Thessalonians (1:2-10)
- III.** Conduct in Ministry (2:1-16)
- IV.** Concern for the Thessalonians (2:17–3:13)
- V.** Call to Sanctification (4:1-12)
- VI.** Christ's Second Coming (4:13–5:11)
- VII.** Concluding Exhortations and Blessings (5:12-28)

## 2 THESSALONIANS

- I.** Introduction (1:1-12)
- II.** Instruction of the Thessalonians (2:1-17)
- III.** Injunctions to the Thessalonians (3:1-16)
- IV.** Conclusion (3:17-18)



### ON THE COVER

Ruins of the Roman agora (marketplace) at Thessalonica. Two-story porticoes surrounded the site, and in the lower part was an arched thoroughfare with shops on either side. (See Acts 17:5.)



# *Commended*

Transformed lives impact others for the sake of the gospel.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10

Each year, televised award shows honor the work of actors and musicians. Each winner gets a few minutes in the spotlight for a speech, during which they usually thank people for helping them get to that stage to hold that trophy. The truth is, none of us has experienced any degree of success on our own. We all have people who have pointed us in the right direction. And just as important, we have returned the favor. Each of us provides an example for others to follow. For better or worse, we all influence someone.

**Who has influenced you the most in your life? Who are you working to mentor today?**

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# UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

## 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10

Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica began during his second missionary journey. Paul, along with Silas and Timothy, had been called by God in a vision to take the gospel into modern-day Europe for the first time (Acts 16:6-10). While their mission started in Philippi, violence and persecution eventually moved them to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1).

Their work in Thessalonica was disrupted when devout Jews began stirring up trouble (Acts 17:5-9). Paul eventually escaped the city at night and made his way to Berea and Athens (Acts 17:10-34). Even though his time in Thessalonica was short, he apparently was able to establish a core group of believers who became the Thessalonian church.

Paul and his companions spent three Sabbaths teaching in the synagogue of Thessalonica (Acts 17:2). While they were able to establish a Christian congregation in the city, they had little time to take them deeper into the faith. As a result, these young converts had questions about the Christian life, and they needed instruction and discipleship. The apostle composed this letter to praise their growth and to address some of their primary concerns.

Paul likely wrote 1 Thessalonians during his stay in Corinth (Acts 18). It is impossible to know the precise timing between his departure from Thessalonica and his letter, but if Paul came to the city around 50-51 AD, the letter was likely written within a year or two of that date. This would make 1 Thessalonians one of Paul’s earliest letters, likely second only to his Letter to the Galatians.

In general, Paul’s tone in 1 Thessalonians was positive. As opponents consistently persecuted the church, his encouragement and affirmation helped them stay strong in their faith. This letter also provided guidance for Christian living so the Thessalonians could continue their path of spiritual maturity.

**Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10. Make a list of individuals or groups of people found in this passage. What words would you use to describe the relationship between the individuals and groups on your list?**

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# EXPLORE THE TEXT

## PARTNERSHIP (1 THESS. 1:1)

<sup>1</sup> Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy: To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace.

### VERSE 1

Paul began this letter by identifying himself as the primary writer. He also included •**Silvanus** (Silas) and •**Timothy**, since they had helped plant the church. Silas had replaced Barnabas when Paul initiated his second missionary journey. Timothy was a young man who joined the missionaries throughout their work in Greece (Acts 16–17). Paul regularly used the first-person plural “we” throughout the book to emphasize the agreement among the three men.

First Thessalonians 1:1 indicates that their audience was the church in Thessalonica. This city was a metropolitan area located on a major seaport. It had an east-west Roman road passing through town. Given these facts, if the church was equipped in sound doctrine, the truth of the gospel would be able to flourish through the ministry of this church.

The verse also indicates that this trio represented **God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**. From the beginning, Paul and his coworkers wanted their audience to know they were not there to represent themselves or to serve any cause outside of the gospel of Christ. Their only agenda was to equip the saints in sound doctrine so that they would be able to refute the false teaching that was prevalent in that particular area.

Finally, we see that they came to offer **grace** and **peace** to the readers of the letter. The phrasing of *grace* and *peace* was a common greeting of that day. Grace can be easily defined as God’s unconditional love. Peace of mind and heart is what we receive when we accept the unconditional love that God offers in and through a relationship with Jesus.

**Why might it have been important for Paul to emphasize the partnership between him, Silas, and Timothy when writing this letter?**

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Timothy is listed with Paul as co-writer of six New Testament letters (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Philem. 1).

## EVIDENCE (1 THESS. 1:2-5a)

<sup>2</sup> We always thank God for all of you, making mention of you constantly in our prayers. <sup>3</sup> We recall, in the presence of our God and Father, your work produced by faith, your labor motivated by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5a</sup> because our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with full assurance.

## VERSES 2-3

Verse 2 indicates the powerful prayer lives of Paul and his coworkers. They were **making mention** of the congregation **constantly** in their prayers. They always thanked God for the church. Left to ourselves, we will want to take credit for the impact made through us by God; we think it actually has something to do with us. Paul and his coworkers didn't fall into this trap. We also see that their prayers were focused on others. The flesh, once again, leads us to focus more on ourselves. The kind of prayer life evidenced by Paul and his friends can only occur when the ones praying have been personally transformed by the gospel.

Evidence of gospel transformation is also found within the Thessalonian church itself. According to verse 3, the church was laboring out of **love**. The word translated **labor** means to work to the point of exhaustion. They were doing more than the minimum; they were giving everything they had and then striving to give more.

We see further evidence of transformation in the fact that the church was willing to endure because of their hope in Christ. **Endurance** means to stand up under pressure when life gets difficult. Whatever the church was facing in that particular moment, they were enduring for the sake of the gospel.

Finally, we see that they were maintaining **hope** in Jesus and not their own actions. Hope can be defined as a desire for something

beyond the immediate. The church at Thessalonica did desire something beyond the immediate, and the object of that desire was Jesus. We are deceived or deceive ourselves to believe we can hope in our own religious endeavors. When we make it all about our own religious works, we are not living a transformed life. If, however, our hope is in Christ alone, we know we are actively being transformed as we walk with Him.

**To what evidence might a person point as proof of salvation?**

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**VERSES 4-5a**

Paul reminded the Thessalonians they were *loved by God*. He noted his affection for them, calling them *brothers and sisters*. But he was not alone in his attachment. They were *chosen* by God. The apostle’s emphasis was not on who the Thessalonians were or what they had done, but on who God is and what He has done through Christ.

The end result of all of this was the *full assurance* of the *power* of the *Holy Spirit* working in and through the church. The church knew God’s Spirit was working in and through them because He was actively and powerfully changing them individually and collectively as a church. Even when persecuted, the Thessalonians had no reason to doubt that God was with them and would empower them. Paul’s own life demonstrated his firm conviction despite consistent suffering.

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**KEY DOCTRINE: *God’s Purpose of Grace***

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners.  
(See Rom. 11:5-7.)

**INFLUENCE** (1 THESS. 1:5b-8)

<sup>5b</sup> **You know how we lived among you for your benefit, <sup>6</sup> and you yourselves became imitators of us and of the Lord when, in spite of**



severe persecution, you welcomed the message with joy from the Holy Spirit. <sup>7</sup> As a result, you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. <sup>8</sup> For the word of the Lord rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place that your faith in God has gone out. Therefore, we don't need to say anything,

**VERSES 5b-6**

A life transformed by Christ will influence others. Paul again serves as the example. Verse 5b indicates that Paul, Silas, and Timothy ***lived among*** those with whom they came to share the gospel. Living among those they were sharing the gospel with allowed the people to see them in the good times as well as the difficult times. Paul, Silas, and Timothy faced persecution during their initial visit to Thessalonica and understood the pressure being faced by these believers.

According to verse 6, the persecution was severe. Acts 17:5-10 gives an account of what was taking place. Jews in the region had become aware of Paul's proclamation of Christ. They were threatened by his message and began to attack those within the city who welcomed Paul and his coworkers.

Influence also is found in the fact that the church endured the persecution and ***became imitators*** of Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Paul and company knew the risk of proclaiming Christ, but that did not stop them from doing so. The church understood how to endure because the model had been set before them.

**BIBLE SKILL:** *Use other Scripture to understand the context for this passage.*

Review Acts 16–18. Focus on Paul’s motivation for entering Greece and examine the different experiences he had in each city on his journey. What key actions and events stick out from Paul’s time in Thessalonica? How might those experiences impact his feelings toward the believers in Thessalonica?

## VERSES 7-8

The Thessalonians ***became an example to all believers in •Macedonia and •Achaia.*** The flesh naturally would want to get out of persecution as quickly as possible. The Lord, however, can use persecution to make us more like Him and to influence others.

The influence of the Thessalonians was so significant that the gospel message ***rang out*** from among them well beyond the immediate region. The phrase *rang out* points to the blasting of a trumpet or to proclaiming with vigor. It is important to note that it was ***the word of the Lord*** that was proclaimed. Yes, severe persecution was taking place, but it was not silencing the message. The gospel was being shouted through the lives of those enduring the struggle.

**How far does your influence for the gospel reach? How can you expand that influence?**

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Macedonia was a Roman province in the northernmost part of ancient Greece (Acts 16:9-10). Thessalonica was its largest city and capital of the province. Achaia was a Roman province in the southern half of ancient Greece. The major cities of Achaia included Athens (Acts 17:16-33) and Corinth (Acts 18:27-28).

## PURPOSE (1 THESS. 1:9-10)

**<sup>9</sup> for they themselves report what kind of reception we had from you: how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God <sup>10</sup> and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead — Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.**

## VERSES 9-10

Why? This is one of our favorite questions to ask. God, why are you allowing me to go through this struggle? Why did this have to happen

to me at this time? The list of why questions can seem endless. All too often, however, we are at the center of the why questions. When this is the case, we tend to miss the bigger purpose of living for and spreading the gospel message. The group of believers at Thessalonica didn't miss the greater purpose. If they had turned inward and focused on either temporary or secondary matters, they would have missed the greater purpose of their struggles.

We find a twofold purpose in verses 9 and 10. First, the church had **turned to God** and away **from idols**. *Turned* is a verb, thus showing an action, and this action was a personal choice. The church had chosen to turn from idols and to serve the living and true God. It is one thing to turn *from* someone or something and it is another thing to turn *to* Someone. That geographic region was known for the worship of idols. The Thessalonian believers were choosing to turn from this false worship to worship the living God—no matter the cost.

***When we serve with a long-term purpose in mind, the temporary is less likely to distract us.***

The second purpose we find is an active waiting. A proper understanding of the word **wait** shows one who is willing to stay or remain in the present state. These believers were willing to remain in a state of worship even in the midst of severe persecution. They knew that it was worth it, and they would not allow temporary discomfort to dissuade them from a much higher call.

They could wait because they knew One was coming to rescue them from **the coming wrath**. When we serve with a long-term purpose in mind, the temporary is less likely to distract us. Their circumstances were less than ideal, but this body of believers knew Jesus was their Rescuer.

**How does the resurrection of Jesus give a person hope and purpose?**

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# APPLY THE TEXT

- Kingdom work involves believers working in partnership.
- The gospel produces evidence of its power.
- As believers seek to imitate Christ, they influence others to do the same.
- The resurrection of Jesus gives believers hope and a future.

**Identify as a group ways of fostering partnerships to expand your influence for Christ within the community. What steps need to be taken to foster these partnerships?**

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**List ways the gospel has changed your life. Thank God for the changes listed and ask Him to show you other areas that you need to allow Him to change.**

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**Who are you influencing for the cause of Christ? How are you influencing them? What needs to change in your life to increase your influence for Christ?**

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## PRAYER NEEDS

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