

E-Sword Notes

on

First Thessalonians

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Introduction

1st THESSALONIANS

AUTHOR: The book of First Thessalonians is probably the first inspired book of the Apostle Paul. It was written about AD 50 or AD 51 from Corinth on the second missionary journey.

BACKGROUND: Thessalonica was a large city of about 200,000 in Macedonia, which is today northern Greece. Its modern name is Salonika. As a strategic commercial center it had attracted a large community of Jews and they had a synagogue ([Act 17:1](#)). Paul was given an opportunity to speak in the synagogue for three Sabbath days and "reasoned with them from the scriptures," showing that Jesus of Nazareth came in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and promises ([Act 17:2-3](#)).

While some of the Jews believed, there was a greater number of God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women ([Act 17:4](#)). The Jews, becoming jealous, gathered up some wicked men from the market place and formed a mob. They attacked the house of Jason and took some of the brethren before the city authorities and accused them of harboring men "who have upset the world and have come here also" ([Act 17:5-8](#)).

Paul's stay in Thessalonica was undoubtedly filled with more adventure and activity than Luke's account in Acts could briefly record. There are three factors that seem to indicate this:

- (1) there was a large number of Gentile converts there,
- (2) Paul engaged in some manual labor during this period ([2Th 3:8](#)),
- (3) in [Php 4:16](#) he indicated that from the Philippian church he had received aid more than once while in other parts of Macedonia.

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA

The church at Thessalonica had been a very faithful active church up to the time of this first letter. Paul speaks of their "work of faith, and labor of love, and steadfastness of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ" ([1Th 1:3](#)). He also states that they had set an example for the believers in Macedonia and Achaia, particularly in the fact that from them "the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth" ([1Th 1:8](#)).

Paul's success with the church there had brought them severe persecution from the Jews. When he was forced to leave them he was very eager to learn how things were going and sent Timothy to them ([1Th 3:1-5](#); [1Th 2:17](#)). Timothy's report of their steadfastness in the faith and some of the questions (especially about Jesus' second coming) may have prompted this letter.

AN OUTLINE OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

“THE MODEL CHURCH -- 1:7”

I. PAUL’S ENCOURAGEMENT – CH. 1

(What Every Church Should Be!)

1. An Elect People 1:1-4
2. An Exemplary People 1:5-7
3. An Enthusiastic People 1:8
4. An Expectant People 1:9-10

II. PAUL’S EXAMPLE - CH 2 & 3

(What Every Church Deserves!)

- A. A Good Start: From one ...
 1. Who is Faithful Like a Steward 2:1-6
 2. Who Has Love Like a Mother 2:7-8
 - 3
 3. Who Is Concerned Like a Father 2:9-12
- B. A Good Influence
 1. God’s Word Within Them 2:13
 2. God’s People Around Them 2:14-16
 3. God’s Glory Before Them 2:17-20
- C. A Good “Paul”
 1. He Sent Them a Helper 3:1-5
 2. He Wrote Them a Letter 3:6-8
 3. He Prayed for Them 3:9-12

III. PAUL’S EXHORTATION - CH 4 & 5

(How Every Church Should Walk!)

1. In Holiness 4:1-8
2. In Harmony 4:9-10
3. In Honesty 4:11-12
4. In Hope 4:13 - 5:11
5. In Helpfulness 5:12-28

CONTENTS OF I THESSALONIANS

Paul begins his letters by giving thanks to God for them. He mentioned they had readily received the Gospel even in the face of much tribulation; and their zeal and diligence in spreading the Gospel through that part of the world was known by all.

Chapter 1. Thessalonica was a city filled with idolaters, as were many others, but "they had turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God" ([1Th 1:9](#)).

Chapter 2. In the first part of chapter two Paul emphasizes the characteristics of his work among them by pointing out: 1) They had preached with boldness in the face of opposition ([1Th 2:2](#)); 2) Their preaching had been free from deceit, and they had spoken so as to please God ([1Th 2:3-4](#)); 3) They did not seek glory from men ([1Th 2:6](#)); 4) They had preached the Gospel in love and truth and for the Thessalonians ([1Th 2:8](#)); 5) They had worked with their hands that they might not be a burden to the brethren ([1Th 2:9](#); [2Th 3:8](#)).

In this same chapter Paul makes a wonderful statement concerning the attitude with which they had received the Gospel: "You accepted it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God" ([1Th 2:13](#)). Paul stated his desire to see them and that Satan had hindered his plans ([1Th 2:17-18](#)).

Chapter 3. He explains that when his anxiety over their welfare could endure no longer he sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage them (1Th 3:1-2). He had warned them that persecution would come ([1Th 3:3-4](#)) and rejoiced over Timothy's good report concerning their faith ([1Th 3:6-11](#)).

Chapter 4. Paul emphasized the necessity of boldness in life (4:1-8) and exhorted them to brotherly love ([1Th 4:9-10](#)). Beginning with vs. 13 he instructs them concerning the second coming of Christ and those dead in the Lord and exhorts them "to comfort one another with these words."

Chapter 5. The need for watchful and sobriety in view of the Lord's coming is emphasized ([1Th 5:1-11](#)). After a number of brief exhortations ([1Th 5:12-22](#)) Paul concludes the epistle with a prayer ([1Th 5:23-24](#)), some personal requests ([1Th 5:25-27](#)), and his blessings upon them ([1Th 5:28](#)).

First Thessalonians

1. The city of Thessalonika is one of the NT cities that has survived into the 21st century.
2. Read of the establishment of the church in this city in Acts 17:1-9.
3. The apostle Paul is the author of the letter, writing from Corinth.
4. The occasion of the letter- Paul has just received word had they are doing.

VALUE OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians has special significance for the following reasons:

I. IT IS AMONG THE EARLIEST OF ANY NT WRITINGS

1. Written around AD 50-52, it is the earliest of Paul's writings.
2. Thus it reflects the teaching and belief of the church at a very early stage, a time about twenty years after the resurrection of Christ.

II. A NUMBER OF GREAT PAULINE DOCTRINES ARE FOUND IN 1ST THESSALONIANS

1. There is a great emphasis on the doctrine of God as contrasted with the false gods when the Thessalonians formerly worshiped
 - a. Reference to God as "Father" shows the term in general use -- 1:1; 3:11; 3:13
 - b. God as source of the gospel, approving their work, to whose verdict they submit, upon whom they depend for all that is good – 1:4, 8, 9; 3:11; 5:23
 - c. Direct attention of Thessalonians to God as the source of their every need – 1:4, 8; 3:11; 4:5; 5:23 f.
2. The epistle presents an exalted view of Christ.
1:5; 1:1; 3:11; 3:13; 4:6, 17; 5:2
3. There is no elaboration on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.
1:5; 1:6; 5:19; 4:8
4. The doctrine of salvation is associated with Christ.
5:10; 1:10; 1:1; 5:10; 4:17
5. The second coming of Christ and the resurrection -- 4:13-18
The uncertainty of the time of his coming -- 5:1-11 (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:15-7; 5:23).
6. Characteristical Pauline emphasis on Christian virtues and on moral and ethical conduct.
1:3; 4:3-8; 4:9-12; 5:1-8

III. INSIGHT INTO THE EVANGELISTIC MESSAGE OF PAUL

1. The futility of idol worship. Paul preached “a living and true God.”
2. Paul proclaimed the deity, the death, the resurrection, and the second coming of Jesus. 1:9 ff
3. He made clear that the message delivered by him was the word of God -- 2:13.
(2:10-12; 3:3 f; 4:1 f; 4:9; 5:1 f)

IV. FIRST THESSALONIANS REVEALS PAUL’S ATTITUDE AND FEELING TOWARD HIS CONVERTS

1. He thanked God for them and prayed constantly for them -- 1:2.
2. He dealt gently with them as a nurse taking care of her own children -- 2:7; 3:1 f.
3. He had admonished them as a father admonishes his children - 2:11.
4. He felt anxiety on their behalf--willing to be deprived of Timothy’s presence.
5. He felt a great a renewal of spirit after Timothy’s favorable report – 3:6 ff.
6. He assured Thessalonians they were his joy and crown – 2:19 f.

1st Thessalonians

Key Word: "Watch"

[1Th 1:7](#) The Model Church

Cf. [Act 17:1](#) - 14, for the establishment of the church at Thessalonica.

Date of the Epistle: @ A.D. 51.

Chapter 1. What Every Church Should Be!

1. An Elect People, 1:1-5
2. An Exemplary People, 1:5-7
3. An Evangelistic People, 1:8
4. An Earnest People, 1:9
5. An Expectant People, 1:9-10

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

Paul. He does not call himself "an apostle,"... because his apostleship had never been called in question by the Thessalonians. For the same reason he omits this title in the Epistle to the Philippians; whereas he strongly insists upon it in his Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians, because among them there were many opposed to his authority. PPC

Silvanus -- Silas, *woody*; Pennsylvania = "god of the woods". He is mentioned as a chief man among the brethren, and a prophet or inspired teacher ([Acts 15:22, 32](#)). His Latin name renders it probable that he was a Hellenistic Jew, and, like Paul, he was a Roman citizen ([Acts 16:37](#)). He was sent with Judas Barsabas from Jerusalem, to convey the apostolic decrees to Antioch; and he accompanied Paul instead of Barnabas on his second missionary journey ([Acts 15:40](#)). He suffered imprisonment with Paul at Philippi; and was engaged with him in preaching the gospel in Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth. His ministry at Corinth is honourably mentioned by Paul in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians ([2 Cor. 1:9](#)). After this there is no more mention of Silvanus in the Acts, and it is doubtful whether he was the Silvanus by whom the First Epistle of Peter was conveyed to the Churches of Asia ([1 Pet. 5:12](#))

And Timotheus. The well-known disciple of Paul. He was a native of Lystra, having a Greek father and a Jewish mother ([Acts 16:1](#)). He joined Paul and Silas on their second missionary journey at Lystra, and was with them in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth. [See PPC for more. An BKC]

Church -- assembly. The word "Church" denotes a select assembly; here, Christians selected from the world.

Thessalonians -- was chiefly composed of converted Gentiles, with a small number of converted Jews

Grace -- From "greeting" to favor.

Peace -- The Hebrew greeting, Shalom.

1 Thessalonians 1:2

1 Th 1:2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,

“We” -- This refers to Paul, Silas and Timothy (the believing Jewish mission team). Paul used this PLURAL PRONOUN more often in I Thess. than in any other letter.

We give thanks -- Paul's letters often follow conventions for ancient letter-writing by including a prayer for the recipients. Here Paul thanks God for the Thessalonians' faith, which continued to grow despite his absence ([1Th 2:17](#) –3:5)

For the connection of *prayer* and *thanksgiving*, see notes on [1Th 5:17-18](#).

Constantly [without ceasing] -- ἀδιαλείπτως (*adialeiptōs*): adverb; = G89, continuously, constantly, unceasingly ([Rom 1:9](#); [1Th 1:2](#); [1Th 2:13](#); [1Th 5:17+](#)) [v 3 in KJV].

our prayers. -- Paul and his companions prayed frequently for the entire flock and 3 of those prayers are offered in this letter ([1Th 1:2-3](#); [1Th 3:11-13](#); [1Th 5:23-24](#)).

1 Thessalonians 1:3

1Th 1:3 remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Remembering before our God our Father -- It is in the character of God as *Father* that Paul approaches God in prayer (comp. [1Th 3:11](#); [2Th 2:16](#); and *the Lord's prayer*: “After this manner pray ye, Our Father”); and “in God” as “Father” v 1.

Work of faith -- faithful work, obedience, [Jas 2:24](#), [Joh 6:28](#)

Labor of love -- loving labor; service.

Steadfastness [patience] of hope -- hopeful patience; motivation.

Faith, love, and hope are Paul's favorite three fold combination of Christian virtues ([1Co 13:13](#); [1Th 5:8](#)). They serve as evidence of the Thessalonians' conversion and the effectiveness of Paul's missionary efforts among them.

hope in our Lord Jesus Christ -- The common hope of Paul and the Thessalonians rested in Jesus Christ as Messiah, Savior, and Redeemer.

1 Thessalonians 1:4

1Th 1:4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,

Knowing -- Paul knew it; they had accepted the Gospel. How? He knew it by their change, cf v. 3 and v. 9. ([1Th 1:9](#))

Chosen [election of God] you -- NASV "His choice of you" God chooses those who obey the gospel.

Election.

1. Salvation being with God.
2. Salvation involves love, grace, and mercy.
3. Election (salvation) involved faith, v.3, v.6, receiving the Word ([Act 2:41](#)).
4. Election, salvation, involves the Godhead, v.3, v.6
5. Election, salvation, is accompanied by a change of life, v.3, v.9.

In response to Paul's preaching the Thessalonians had received the Word ([1Th 1:6](#)) - had obeyed it by turning to God from idols ([1Th 1:9](#)).

1 Thessalonians 1:5

1Th 1:5 because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

Our gospel -- That gospel which was preached by Paul and the apostles. cf. [1Th 2:13](#); [1Co 2:4-5](#).

Gospel came ... in power ... Holy Spirit -- Paul's preaching was accompanied by miraculous proof or evidence of the truthfulness of what he was preaching.

With full conviction [assurance] -- Conviction, on the part of the preachers, not with guile or deceit. cf. [1Th 2:3-5](#).

How the word came to them at Thessalonica:

- 1) not in word only, but
- 2) in power (miracles); and
- 3) in the Holy Spirit (by inspiration), and
- 4) with full conviction (Paul was persuaded and preached persuasively with demonstration of the truth in the way he lived.)

1 Thessalonians 1:6

1Th 1:6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

What Every Church Should Be (cont. 1:8)

2. *An Exemplary People* - v. 5-7

- 1) Example: in the way they received the Word, v.6 cf. [1Th 2:13](#)
- 2) Example: they followed their spiritual leaders, v.6
- 3) Example: they suffered for Christ.
("Shaping up down here so we will fit in up there.")

Imitators [followers] -- Imitators of Paul as he imitated Christ. Not "disciples of Paul." An "imitator" not only accepts the teaching of another, but copies his example. This imitation consisted (1) in the joyful endurance of suffering for the Gospel's sake, but (2) also in the vigour which marked their life corresponding to that of the Apostle's ministry amongst them (ver. 4).

Received -- They responded by believing the message and shaping their lives around it. See [1Th 2:13](#).

The word -- The gospel that Paul preached, cf. [1Co 15:1-4](#).

Much affliction -- Along with great, much, tribulation. The same word is described in [Act 17:5-9](#). Persecution marked out the path in which the Thessalonians were called to follow Christ, and gave them an immediate opportunity of showing the genuineness of their faith.

Joy of the Holy Spirit -- Joy, a fruit of the Spirit. [Gal 5:22](#), [Rom 5:2](#), [Rom 5:11](#), [Rom 14:17](#). Joy in the midst of suffering, shows the depth of their faith and their hope.

At a later time ([2Co 8:2](#)) Paul noted that the Macedonian churches "in much proof of afflictions, [and] the abundance of their joy" they held to their faith.

1 Thessalonians 1:7

1Th 1:7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

Exsample -- A pattern or model. Hence, the Thessalonian church is called a model church. *tupos* - the impression left by a seal or die, then came to mean a pattern.

Exsample to all the believers -- They encourages other churches in their part of the world.

Macedonia and in Achaia -- Macedonia was the norther part of Greece today, and Achaia the southern part. The cities of Athens and Corinth were located in Achaia.

1 Thessalonians 1:8

1Th 1:8 For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.

Sounded forth -- ἐξ ἡται from *echeo* - like a trumpet or thunder. (Used only in the passive in regard to the gospel, to be sounded abroad, proclaimed.) They shared the gospel message they had received with others everywhere they went.

3. And Evangelistic People.

1. They were "receivers" [1Th 1:6](#), then "transmitters" v.8

Gone forth everywhere [in every place] -- In the ancient world, news spread as people traveled. Since Thessalonica was a commercial port, the news of the Thessalonians' response to the gospel message spread throughout Macedonia and Achaia.

We wonder if Aquila and Priscilla told Paul they had heard about the church at Thessalonica even in Rome. ?

We need not say anything -- Though Paul reasoned in the synagogue of the Jews only three Sabbaths, it seems better to understand that he then relocated elsewhere in the city.

In all likelihood, Paul spent months not weeks, which accounts for: 1) the two collections he received from Philippi ([Php 4:16](#)); 2) the time he worked night and day ([1Th 2:9](#); [2Th 3:8](#)); and 3) the depth of Paul's concern evidenced in the letter ([1Th 2:7-8](#), [1Th 2:11](#)).

1 Thessalonians 1:9

1Th 1:9 For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

4. An Earnest People.

They themselves -- i.e. people everywhere.

Report concerning us -- What Paul and others heard back about the Thessalonians showed how effective Paul's ministry was among them.

Reception -- (cf. [1Th 2:1](#))

Turned to God from idols -- This indicates primarily a Gentile church. Paul's 3 Sabbaths reasoning with the Jews seems to have not been as effective as his preaching to the Gentiles. cf. Paul at Lystra, [Act 14:15](#).

* Here we have a good picture of *repentance*.

Idols -- All the large Greek and Roman cities had temples where they worshiped their idol gods that resembled a person or animal. The Thessalonians didn't add an idol of Jesus to their pantheon, as would have been their custom before conversion—they abandoned their idols to serve Him.

Thessalonica was filled with images of gods, altars, and temples ([Act 17:1-9](#)). The Thessalonians worshiped Athena, Demeter, Persephone, Poseidon, Pan, Hades and many other deities.

Living and true God -- Contrasted to the "dead" idols of the pagans.

True God -- i.e. genuine. They realized the truth of the one God who was Creator and Sustainer of the whole world.

1 Thessalonians 1:10

1Th 1:10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

5. An Expectant People

Three key doctrines expressed in this verse.

- 1) The Second Coming of the Lord (in the *wait*).
- 2) The resurrection
- 3) A hint of the judgment? "deliverance from the wrath to come."

Wait for his Son from heaven -- Refers to Christ's visible and personal return to earth at the end of the present age. Paul says that Jesus will return from heaven because it is the place where He reigns with God (compare [Eph 1:20-21](#))

This is a recurring theme in the Thessalonian letters - [1Th 3:13](#); [1Th 4:15-17](#); [1Th 5:8](#), [1Th 5:23](#); [2Th 3:6-13](#); (cf. [Act 1:11](#); [2Ti 4:8](#); [Tit 2:11-13](#)).

Raised from the dead -- Christ's resurrection from the dead is the foundation of Christian hope (compare [1Co 15:17-22](#); [2Ti 2:11](#)). It is also the reason believers await His return. Even death cannot hinder union with Christ ([1Th 5:10](#)).

Delivers -- Present tense, "rescues", "delivers". The believers will be delivered (evacuated) from God's wrath that will come upon the world at the end.

Wrath to come -- Divine Judgment. The Greek word used here, *orge*, refers in this context to God's judgment upon the wicked. The believers of Thessalonica are encouraged to not mistake affliction and persecution (*thlipsis*) for God's final judgment on the wicked (*orge*).

1 Thessalonians 2:1

1Th 2:1 For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain.

ch. 2. Suffered -Mistreated - Opposition.

Ch. 2 What Every Church Deserves.

1. An Example like Paul - vs. 1-13

2:1–12 Paul reminds the Thessalonians how he and his fellow workers conducted themselves while in Thessalonica. Paul's goal is to reassure the church of his commitment to them despite his unexpected and prolonged absence from Thessalonica (2:17–3:13). He first contrasts himself with contemporary philosophers to show that they were not motivated by greed or self-indulgence (vv. 2–6). He then reminds the Thessalonians that he and his fellow missionaries ministered to them with gentleness and love (vv. 7–12). He concludes this section with another thanksgiving prayer.

Know -- Perfect tense, active, indicative, 2nd per, plural; continuing results.

Our coming to you [entrance; entering in, RV] -- (same word as in [1Th 1:9](#))

The “For” of this verse is parallel to the “for” of ch. 1:9: what “*they* themselves (other people, strangers in different places) report of us” is confirmed by what “*you* yourselves know” of the successful entrance the Gospel had won at Thessalonica.

Both of these “*fors*”, and all that the Apostle has written since verse 4 of ch. 1, go to sustain his assurance of God's loving “choice” of the Thessalonian believers. We must not allow the artificial division of chapter and verse to break the thread of the writer's thoughts. (CBSC)

Not in vain -- Not a failure. Paul's ministry among the Thessalonians was so fruitful that not only were people saved and a vibrant, reproducing church planted, but the church also grew and flourished even after Paul left (cf. [1Th 1:5-8](#)).

2. A good start; from one: (v.1-12)

- 1) Who is faithful like a steward, v.1-6
- 2) Who has love like a mother, v.7-8
- 3) Who has concern like a father, v.9-12.

1 Thessalonians 2:2

1Th 2:2 But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.

We had already suffered ... as you know -- Paul had informed the Thessalonian converts of his mistreatment at Philippi ([Act 16:22-24](#)).

Philippi -- cf. [Act 16:12-40](#). The first city that Paul came to when entering Macedonia.

*Paul attacks what must have been charges against him.

- 1) Manner of his ministry - boldly in struggles.
- 2) Message - v. 2, Gospel of salvation.
- 3) Motive (v.3a) was pure, not in covetousness.
- 4) Method - straightforward, not flattering, v.9

Conflict [contention' opposition] -- Most likely Paul's Thessalonian opponents were the Jews who were continuing adversaries of Paul, even after he left Thessalonica ([Act 17:5-10](#); [1Th 2:14-16](#)).

They were so intent on destroying the work he had started that they persistently hurled accusations at him and labeled him another self-seeking religious propagandist. They distorted his teaching by accusing him of treason while he was still in the city ([Act 17:7](#)).

The Jews at Thessalonica continued their opposition against Paul following him on to Berea, [Act 17:13](#).

There is no evidence of organized opposition to Paul within the church. ([1Th 3:6](#))

1 Thessalonians 2:3

1Th 2:3 For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive,

Our appeal [exhortation] -- As a missionary for Christ, Paul made an *appeal* for them to hear and obey the gospel of Christ as preachers make to their hearers today.

Error [deceit; lies] -- "not come from error" NASB, "from lies" NCV. Paul reassures the Thessalonians about the integrity of his teaching, motives, and methods. See note on [1Th 1:5](#).

Paul's appeal was not a product of illusion or deception, it was "the word of the truth of the gospel" (col 1.5).

Impurity [uncleanness] -- impurity, cf. v.5(b). Paul had only pure motives and sought their eternal welfare. See how it put it in his letter to the Corinthians, [2Co 4:2](#).

Deceive [guile] -- deceit, cf. v.5(a); Paul used 3 distinctly different words to affirm the truthfulness of his ministry, each expressing a contrast with what was characteristic of false teachers. He first asserted that "his message" was true and not erroneously false. His "manner of life" was pure, not sexually wicked. His "method of ministry" was authentic, not deceptive (see notes on [2Co 4:2](#)). (MSB)

1 Thessalonians 2:4

1Th 2:4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

Approved [allowed] -- Perfect, passive, indicative; Tested and approved. Jesus Christ commissioned Paul as an apostle (Acts 9:4–6), and the churches in Antioch and Jerusalem recognized his status and calling ([Act 13:1](#); [Gal 2:9](#)). Consequently, Paul presents himself and his teaching as worthy of the Thessalonians' trust.

Entrusted [put in trust] -- Like a steward. [Gal 1:11-12](#). Treasure in vessels, [2Co 4:7](#). It could be that some false teachers came into the church to discredit Paul's ministry. This would account for his emphasis in vv. 1–12 on his divine appointment, approval, integrity, and devotion to them. Cf. [Act 9:15](#); [Act 16:9-10](#).

So we speak -- Present tense. Now speaking, and continuing to speak, under this solemn trust, with the sincerity and self-abnegation that our charge demands.

Who tests our hearts [which trieth] -- Examines, tests. From the same verb as *approved* which occurs earlier in the verse. A word-play by Paul.

Vv. 3 and 4 are then a general disclaimer of unworthy motives on the part of the missionaries. Their bold testimony at Thessalonica (vv. 1 and 2) was due to two things—their *sincerity of heart*, and their *loyalty to God*.

1 Thessalonians 2:5

1Th 2:5 For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness.

Words of flattery -- Paul used 3 disclaimers to affirm the purity of his motives for ministry: 1) he denied being a smooth talking preacher who tried to make favorable impressions in order to gain influence for selfish advantage; 2) he did not pretend to be poor and work night and day (cf. [1Th 2:9](#)) as a pretense to get rich in the ministry at their expense; and 3) he didn't use his honored position as an apostle to seek personal glory, only God's glory (cf. [1Co 10:31](#)).

As you know -- It was self-evident; they knew and witnessed how he had been among them.

pretext for greed [cloak of covetousness] -- The Greek word for *greed* here is *pleonexia*, and refers to the desire to possess more than others, regardless of actual need.

Paul and his companions were not greedy, nor did not they use any pretext to disguise greediness - a common practice among traveling philosophers.

God is witness -- Paul calls God as his witness because only God can fully know the motives behind his missionary efforts. Compare [1Th 2:10](#); [Rom 1:9](#); [2Co 1:23](#).

1 Thessalonians 2:6

1Th 2:6 Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

We -- Plural. cf. [1Th 1:1](#). Paul may be attributing the same pure motives to Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy. However, Paul also uses the "editorial" *we* in [1Th 3:1](#) when we know that Paul was alone by himself.

Made demands [burdensome] -- cf. [2Th 3:9](#). Paul did not assert his authority as an apostle; rather, he appealed to the Thessalonians as a friend

NASV "we might have asserted our authority."

As apostles -- Plural. cf. [Act 14:4](#). [Act 14:14](#). An apostle is "one sent." An apostle of Christ was personally chosen by Him and designated to speak and act with special authority, and given special credentials ([Heb 2:3-4](#)).

Remember Barnabas and Silas were "sent out" as representatives or ambassadors of the church at Antioch, therefore they were "apostles" of the church ([Act 13:1-3](#)), and not "apostles" of Christ, as Paul and the twelve were, who were selected by Christ himself.

Some think this is simply *editorial* "apostles."

1 Thessalonians 2:7

1Th 2:7 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.

4) Who was gentle like a -- nursing mother. v. 7-8.

Gentle among you [we were like children] -- "Gentle" is [ἡπιος](#), *e pios*, G2261, mild, gentle. (The word "infants" or "babes" is [νήπιος](#), *ne pios*; G3516; Paul may be making a play on words here. The difference is "babes" begin with "v". See NASB Bible notes.)

The Greek word used here varies one Greek letter ("v") in ancient manuscripts. If Paul intended to use the term *nepios*, then he is saying that he and his coworkers behaved like infants among the Thessalonians. In other words, they were guileless and undemanding. Most manuscripts support this variation. If Paul meant to use the word *epios*, then he is saying that they were gentle among the Thessalonians.

Nursing mother -- Paul may have had in mind Moses' portrayal of himself as a nursing mother to Israel (cf. [Num 11:12](#)). He used the same tender picture with the Corinthians (cf. [2Co 12:14-15](#)) and the Galatians (cf. [Gal 4:19](#)).

Paul is likely using the image of a nursing mother or a wet nurse here. In the Graeco-Roman world, wet nurses were commonly used for feeding infants. Such nurses were highly esteemed for their work and were used by both the upper and lower classes of society. Paul presents this metaphor to characterize the love and care that he and his coworkers showed to the Thessalonians.

Taking care [cherisheth] -- warm, tenderly cares for, used of a mother bird in [Deu 22:6](#) in the (LXX) Septuagint.

Her own children -- The "*nurse*" is mother at the same time - a mother with the babe at her breast, the perfect image of fostering love. Compare Christ's picture in [Mat 23:37](#); [Mat 21:16](#); [Mat 24:19](#); and Paul in [1Co 3:1](#); [1Co 14:20](#).

1 Thessalonians 2:8

1Th 2:8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

Affectionately desirous of you -- The rare and peculiar Greek verb (one word) rendered "*being affectionately desirous*" implies the fondness of a mother's love - "yearning over you".

Paul's gentle treatment involved a willingness to share with the Thessalonians both the Gospel of God and their own lives; that is how much they loved them. Paul, and those with him, constantly yearned for these people, so much so that they found it a continual delight to share their whole lives with them.

Share ... our own selves [souls] -- The missionaries were not merely willing (KJV) to bestow themselves on the Thessalonians, they actually did so, and with the glad consent of a mother nourishing the babe from her own life.

The same verb is rendered “thought-good” in [1Th 3:1](#) (KJV) and the corresponding noun is “good-pleasure” in [2Th 1:11](#) (KJV).

Souls -- *psuche*, breath, physical life, (but a often by implication for the spirit of man.) For “souls” we might read “lives.” *psyché* is never the soul in general, but the individual soul, the personality - our lives, our very selves. (CBSC)

Dear -- αγαπητοι. Sometimes translated "beloved" plural.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

1Th 2:9 For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

5) Who is concerned like a father, v. 9-11.

Labor -- His work v. 9, his walk, v.10; his words v.11-13. [2Th 3:8](#) Paul was probably again making tents,. The church at Philippi sent help to Paul twice, c. [Php 4:16](#).

Toil [travail] -- hardships. “Travail” is added to “labour,” as in [2Th 3:8](#); [2Co 11:27](#) (the reference being in each case to manual labour), to indicate the difficulty, as LABOR indicates the toilsomeness of the Apostle’s work.

Working [laboring] night and day -- Probably making tents. cf. [Act 18:3](#). Greeks considered manual labor the duty of slaves. But Paul and his companions worked in order to set an example for the Thessalonians and relieve them of having to provide financial support (compare [1Th 5:13](#)).

Burden [chargeable] -- A burden. Paul’s goal was to support himself through his long hours of labor so that he would not become a burden to his churches (compare [1Co 9:3-14](#)).

Paul explained this in [2Th 3:7-9](#). He did not ask for any money from the Thessalonians but rather lived on what he earned and what the Philippian church sent ([Php 4:16](#)), so that his motives could not be questioned, unlike the false teachers who always sought money (cf. [1Pe 5:2](#)).

The gospel of God -- . Cf. [Rom 1:1](#). The good news from God which Paul preached included these truths: 1) the authority and truthfulness of Scripture (v. 13); 2) the deity of Christ ([Rom 10:9](#)); 3) the sinfulness of mankind ([Rom 3:23](#)); 4) Christ’s death and resurrection ([1Co 15:4-5](#)); and 5) salvation by God’s grace through man’s faith ([Eph 2:8-9](#)). Paul’s summary of the gospel is in [1Co 15:1-4](#).

1 Thessalonians 2:10

1Th 2:10 You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers.

3. Paul's walk among them.

- 1) devoutly - toward God.
- 2) uprightly - toward man.
- 3) blamelessly - toward self. (without reproach)

You are witnesses -- (plural); Emphatic. Under OT law it took two or more witnesses to verify truth ([Num 35:30](#); [Deu 17:6](#); [Deu 19:15](#); [2Co 13:1](#)).

And God also -- Here Paul called on both the Thessalonians and God as witnesses to affirm his holy conduct in the ministry. Cf. [2Co 1:12](#).

Holy [holily] -- devoutly, religious. The Greek adverb does not represent the ordinary NT word for “holy” (*hagios*, i.e. saint), but another adjective (*hosios*, G3743), which is frequent in the O.T. and in common Greek. The former denotes Holiness as a relationship to God; the latter, as a condition or disposition of the man: they differ as *consecrated* from *religious* or *pious*.

Righteous [justly] -- upright. The terms **holy** and **righteous** are not mutually exclusive, but may apply to the same acts and persons.

The “*holy*” man has regard to the sanctities, the “*righteous*” man to the duties of life; but duty is sacred, and piety is duty. They cover the whole field of conduct, regarded in turn from the religious and moral standpoint, while “*unblameably*” affixes the seal of approval both by God and man.

Blameless -- (cf. [1Th 3:13](#); [1Th 5:23](#).) This seems to refer to his duties both to God and man.

The significance of these three terms lies not in their distinctive meanings (they are virtually synonymous) but in their number, as they emphasize the irreproachable character of Paul’s conduct “among you who believed

Our conduct -- The behavior of Paul and his companions.

1 Thessalonians 2:11

1Th 2:11 For you know how, like a father with his children,

Paul often piles up descriptions like a mountain: exhorting, encouraging, imploring.

Like a father -- Although Romans valued the dignity of the stern father, most ancient portrayals of fathers (including Roman ones) stress their love, indulgence and concern for their children.

* **“Dealt with”** is not in the Greek, but English idiom requires some such verb to sustain the participles that follow.

With his children -- cf. [1Co 4:14-21](#). The great philosophers often compared their concern for their hearers to that of a father as well as to that of a nurse ([1Th 2:7](#)), and disciples often saw teachers as paternal figures.

(Translations have divided verses 11 and 12 differently; some put part of this into verse 12.)

1 Thessalonians 2:12

1Th 2:12 we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

(Translations have divided verses 11 and 12 differently; some put part of this in verse 11.)

We exhorted ... encouraged ... charged -- Here Paul gives three Greek participles describing his preaching activity: (1) “exhorting” see the word definition at [G3870](#); (2) “encouraging” [G3888](#); and (3) “imploring” testifying [“charged” ESV] [G3140](#).

Each one of you -- Each; emphatic and personal.

Walk in a manny worthy -- “Walk” is the common Hebrew and O.T. figure for the way one conducts his life. In living an honorable and noble life, the Thessalonians will please God and win the respect of outsiders ([1Th 4:1](#), [1Th 4:12](#)).

God who calls you -- [called] -- Calls. (verb, present, active, participle, genitive, masculine, singular,) [Rom 8:28](#); [1Th 5:24](#); [2Th 2:14](#). God calls all men through the gospel of Christ to come to Him and accept the way of life that is holy, godly, and just, [1Th 2:14](#).

Into -- Preposition *eis* “into”.

Into his own kingdom and glory -- Here and now. Kingdom and glory, (noun: accusative, singular, feminine.)

Christ came to build his community of followers, calling them out of a worldly way of life to be His the church, [Mat 16:18](#), which is also called a “kingdom” cf. [Mat 16:19-20](#); [Col 1:13](#); [Col 1:18](#).

Kingdom -- “Church” in [1Th 1:1](#). The Greek word used in this verse, *basilea*, refers in this context to the domain God rules as King. Believers must live in accordance with His commands as subjects within His kingdom.

Kingdom and glory -- One and the same.

1 Thessalonians

1Th 2:13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

New Paragraph

B. A Good Influence, 2:14-20

1. God's Word within them, v.13
2. God's People around them, v.14-15
3. God's Glory before them, v.16-20

Thank God constantly -- Paul had a great deal to be thankful to God for; they way the Thessalonians had responded to the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

Word of God -- They: 1. appreciated, 2. appropriated, and 3. applied the gospel message Paul preached ([Act 8:14](#); [Act 13:46](#); [2Ti 2:9](#)). The Thessalonians recognized that Paul's message came from God, not human beings.

You accepted it -- They had *received* Paul's preaching, believed it ([1Th 1:8](#)) and turned their way of life around (repentance, [1Th 1:9](#)) and had decided to live their lives pleasing to God ([1Th 2:12](#)).

Word of God -- NASV "which also performs its work in you who believe."

Which is at work -- The Word does what? It produced believers! [Rom 10:17](#), [Heb 4:12](#), [Col 3:16](#). The Word of God given to man by the Holy Spirit leads men to faith, repentance, and salvation.

* Truth effects people, and the greater truth has the greatest effect.

INSPIRATION - [2Ti 3:16](#), [2Pe 1:21](#), [1Co 14:37](#), [1Th 2:13](#), [Gal 1:11-12](#), [Mat 17:5](#), [Luk 1:68-70](#),

1 Thessalonians 2:14

1Th 2:14 For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews,

For you, brothers -- Country-men, Paul called both the Gentiles and Jews of Thessalonica, "brothers."

Imitators of the churches -- Like the churches in Judea were suffering at the hand of their fellow Jews, so the "brothers" at Thessalonica were being persecuted by apparently both Jews and their own countrymen.

As they did -- The "they" is reference to Christians in Judea. Paul himself had been among the first leaders in the persecution against the early Christians, [Act 8:1-3](#); [Act 9:1-2](#).

Jews -- The Jews of Judea. [Heb 10:33](#). Now, after Paul's own conversion, the Jews were among those who most bitterly attacked Paul.

1 Thessalonians 2:15

1Th 2:15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind

The Jews, who killed ... --

- 1) **Lord Jesus** -- They crucified Him.
- 2) **Prophets** -- John the Baptist, Stephen, James (as they did the OT prophets)
- 3) **Drove us out**, Persecuted us -- NASV "drove us out"
- 4) **Displeased God** --
- 5) **Oppose** -- Contrary, Hostile, contrary winds, opposing. See [1Th 2:16](#) for how they did this:
- 6) **Hindering us** -- Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles -- [Act 13:45](#).
- 7) **Fill up their sins** -- (v.16) To fill up the measure of their sins, cf. [Gen 15:16](#). The Jewish persecution of the Christians was heaping sin upon sin. As though the bowl of God's wrath against them was filling up.

* Paul was certainly not antisemitic, but this was the truth.

Killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets -- There is no question that the Jews were responsible for the death of their Messiah, though the Romans carried out the execution. It was the Jews who brought the case against Him and demanded His death (cf. [Luk 23:1-24](#), [Luk 23:34-38](#)), just as they had killed the prophets (cf. [Mat 23:34](#); [Mat 23:37](#); [Act 7:51-52](#)).

Opposed all mankind -- Paul advises that new believers should not be surprised by the hostility of certain Jews. He also advises them against being discouraged by their afflictions as though the gods were punishing them.

1 Thessalonians 2:16

1Th 2:16 by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved--so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But God's wrath has come upon them at last!

(See the notes on the previous verse as well.)

By hindering [Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles] -- [Act 13:45](#).

The Jewish element in the Gentile cities Paul visited seemed particularly set on Paul not working with the Gentiles. cf. [Act 17:4-5](#); [Act 17:13](#); [Act 14:19](#);

Fill up the measure of their sins -- cf. [Gen 15:16](#), Their persecutions were heaping sin upon sin. As though the bowl of God's wrath against them was filling up. (God seems to be patient with sins, until one's sins "fill up".)

God's wrath -- God's displeasure and anger.

Come upon them at last -- Undoubtedly a reference to AD 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. The Jewish nation received retribution from God for their rejection of His Son, cf. [Mat 22:7](#); [Mat 21:38-40](#); [Mat 21:43-45](#).

1 Thessalonians 2:17

1Th 2:17 But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face,

We were torn away from you -- Bereft, Literally *orphaned*. Paul's preaching at Thessalonica was cut short by the persecution of local Jews, and the new Christians helped Paul escaped by night. [Act 17:5-6](#); [Act 10:1](#).

In person not in heart -- Paul's concern and love remained with the brethren in Thessalonica. He wanted them to know he had not abandoned them.

This letters was written back to Thessalonica shortly after having to leave them, probably from Corinth after learning from Timothy how the church was fairing in the face of their persecution.

This letter, First Thessalonians, may have been Paul's first epistle that has been preserved for us by the Holy Spirit ([Mat 24:35](#)).

Endeavored .. eagerly .. great desire -- Paul heaped these words together showing the depth of his desire to return to see them, [1Th 2:18](#).

With great desire -- This term is often rendered “lust,” in a strong negative sense, and rarely is it used in a positive sense as it does here.

See you face to face -- A euphuism for being present with them. Paul desired and planned to visit them again, which he did later.

1 Thessalonians 2:18

1Th 2:18 because we wanted to come to you--I, Paul, again and again--but Satan hindered us.

We wanted to come to you -- Paul has expressed the depth of his desire to visit them again in person in the previous verse.

Some of the Thessalonians may have worried that Paul had abandoned them when he abruptly left the city and did not return. (See note on [1Th 2:17](#)). Paul assures the believers at Thessalonica that his separation from them was not his choice—Satan hindered him.

Again and again [once and again] -- more than once.

Satan hinder us -- Was this because at Thessalonica they took security of Jason? [Act 17:9](#). The bond Jason made may have been on the condition that Paul would leave and not return to Thessalonica.

Satan, which means "adversary" continually worked against the churches Paul was establishing. Satan was continually working to tear down the church that Christ promised to build (cf. [Mat 16:18](#)). He was said to be present at the churches of Jerusalem ([Act 5:1-10](#)), Smyrna ([Rev 2:9-10](#)), Pergamum ([Rev 2:13](#)), Thyatira ([Rev 2:24](#)), Philadelphia ([Rev 3:9](#)), Ephesus ([1Ti 3:6-7](#)), and Corinth ([2Co 2:1-11](#)).

1 Thessalonians 2:19

1Th 2:19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

What -- Or "who". Paul is pointing to the Christians at Thessalonica themselves.

Hope or Joy or Crown -- Paul had an affinity for piling up words in a triple fashion (see [1Th 2:17](#)). see [Php 4:1](#). He was happy and rejoiced in the faithfulness of the Thessalonians.

Crown -- *Stephenos*, the victory laurel. Even in the OT crowns and garlands were used as symbols of future reward, [Isa 28:5](#), [Isa 62:3](#), [Isa 61:3](#).

Paul shared similar words with the Philippians, [Php 4:1](#).

His coming -- Paul would have joy when he saw the Thessalonian Christians in the presence of Christ at His coming (at the judgement or in heaven. This is a good answer to the question, "Will we know each other in heaven?" Paul indicates he would know, or recognize, them.)

Coming -- *παρουσια*, official royal visit, about 22 times in the NT See [1Th 1:10](#); In this context it undoubtedly refers to the Lord's return at the resurrection and judgment.

Some Various Comings of Christ

***1 Emmanuel**, the incarnation - [Mat 1:23](#); [Joh 1:14](#); [Joh 6:38](#); [Gal 4:4](#)

This was the coming of the Lord in the flesh, his birth at Bethlehem.

2 Pentecost, [Mat 16:28](#) ([Mar 9:1](#)) [Mar 14:62](#), [Mat 26:64](#)

In some significant way it could be said that Christ also came on Pentecost representatively when he sent his promise of the Holy Spirit.

3 To Paul at His Conversion __ [Act 26:16](#), [Act 22:7-9](#) ; [1Co 15:8](#)

The Lord came to Paul so he could see him alive after his crucifixion and thus qualify him to be an apostle.

4 In Visions -- At Jerusalem, [Act 22:17-18](#) (after conversion);

At Corinth, [Act 18:9](#); again at Jerusalem, [Act 23:11](#)

5 AD 70, His coming in judgment upon the Jews for their rejection.

[Mat 24:27](#), [Mat 24:30](#), [Mat 24:44](#), [Mat 24:39](#); [Mar 13:26-30](#); [Luk 21:20-27](#); [Heb 10:37](#); [Jam 5:8](#)

6 The Second Coming at the Resurrection -- [1Th 1:1-18](#).

1 Thessalonians 2:20

1Th 2:20 For you are our glory and joy.

You are -- (plural); The Thessalonian brethren. The "are" is present tense, and indicated they were abiding in faithfulness.

Our glory and joy -- Paul rejoiced to learn how well the church was thriving.
Glory is praise and honour from others; *joy* is one's own delight.

Verse 19 & 20 indicates recognition of each other in heaven.

1 Thessalonians 3:1

1Th 3:1 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone,

- C. A Good Encourager Like Paul
1. He sent them a Helper (Timothy) v.1-5
 2. He wrote them a Letter, v. 6-8
 3. He Prayed for them, v.9-12

Therefore [Wherefore] -- On account of the things mentioned.

We -- Plural, but in v.5 it is singular. Apparently this is an "editorial" "we".

Bear it no longer [forbear] -- endure. It seems that when Paul was joined at Athens by Timothy (and probably Silas) he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to learn how the church was fairing and to encourage them [1Th 3:2](#).

Athens -- Paul had gone to Berea from Thessalonica, and when the Thessalonian Jews stirred up trouble there Paul was sent on to Athens by ship, [Act 17:13-14](#).

(In regard to Paul's route from Philippi, to Thessalonica, Berea, and to Athens consult your map. He goes on to Corinth from Athens, and from there pens this letter.)

We .. alone -- This is also plural, but this is an editorial "we". Luke's description in Acts of Paul's entrance into Corinth indicate that Paul was by himself.

The brothers from Berea sent Paul on to Athens by ship for his safety, and if Silas and Timothy had accompanied him on the ship, he sent them back to Macedonia, [Act 17:13-14](#); [1Th 3:1-2](#).

1 Thessalonians 3:2

1Th 3:2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith,

Sent Timothy -- from Athens. Notice the qualification of Timothy, who had recently joined Paul on this missionary journey at Lystra. Brother, minister, fellowlaborer. (Christian, Servant, a Team-man). And note Timothy's mission now to Macedonia.

Coworker [**minister**, *diakonos*, servant, TR:] -- συνεργὸν coworker, NA26. (And some Greek texts have both.)

Establish -- strengthen, support. The Greek word used here, *sterizo*, means to be resolved in belief or attitude. Paul sent Timothy to help the Thessalonians remain committed to the faith in the midst of their hardships.

Exhort [**comfort**] -- encourage. Paul sent Timothy to *establish*, and *encourage* them in their *faith*. This was a common ministry concern and practice of Paul (cf. [Act 14:22](#); [Act 15:32](#); [Act 18:23](#)). Paul's concern did not focus on health, wealth, self-esteem, or ease of life, but rather the spiritual quality of life.

In this chapter we see:

- 1) Paul's Concern
- 2) Timothy's Character
- 3) Church's Comfort

1 Thessalonians 3:3

1Th 3:3 that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this.

Shaken [**moved**] -- disturbed. Apparently, some Jews were persecuting them trying to force them to abandon the Christian way.

You yourselves know -- Paul had told them how Christ has been persecuted, and also the Judean disciples. They could expect to suffer the same things for the name of Christ.

Appointed -- destined. Paul reminds the new believers that persecution is not a sign of God's wrath; rather, faith and suffering are both part of the Christian life ([Php 1:29](#)). Since the Messiah, prophets, and apostles all suffered persecution ([1Th 2:15](#)), the Thessalonians should not be discouraged by their experience.

1 Thessalonians 3:4

1Th 3:4 For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know.

For in fact [**verily**] -- indeed.

We told -- Imperfect: "we repeatedly foretold", kept telling.

Before -- in advance. For other references to the apostles' previous instruction, see [1Th 2:11-12](#); [1Th 4:1-2](#); [2Th 2:5](#); [1Th 2:15](#); [2Th 3:10](#).

Tribulation -- affliction. Paul had told them to expect him to suffer as he had already suffered before his Thessalonian experience ([1Th 2:14-16](#); [Acts 13, 14](#)). During ([Act 17:1-9](#)) and following ([Acts 17:10 – acts 18:11](#)) his time at Thessalonica, Paul knew tribulation.

Just as it happened -- Paul had predicted it, it had happened, - and now they knew.

1 Thessalonians 3:5

1Th 3:5 For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

No longer endure [forbear] -- Ancient letter writers' complaint about not hearing, or receiving letters from someone, this was meant as a sign of affection. [IVP BBgC](#) p. 589.

Forbear -- endure.

I sent to know -- From Athens Paul sent for Timothy and Silas, cf. [Act 17:10-16](#). Perhaps when they arrived in Athens he sent them back to learn about the state of the churches in Macedonia. Or he may have instructed the messengers whom to sent for Timothy and Silas to bring him word how the churches were doing.

The tempter -- Refers to Satan (compare [Mat 4:3](#); [1Co 7:5](#)). Satan had already been characterized as a hinderer ([1Th 2:18](#)) and now as a tempter in the sense of trying/testing for the purpose of causing failure (cf. [Mat 4:3](#); [1Co 7:5](#); [Jas 1:12-18](#)).

Paul likely considered the Thessalonians to be especially vulnerable to temptation because they had converted to faith in Christ only recently. The NT frequently describes Satan's attempts to take advantage of people who are either young in the faith or in a weakened state (e.g., [1Co 7:5](#); [1Ti 3:6-7](#))

Our labor would be in vain -- Paul engaged in difficult labor ([Act 17:5-10](#); [1Th 2:9](#)). If the Thessalonians give into temptation and abandon their faith, his missionary efforts among them would be in vain—a recurring concern for Paul (e.g., [Gal 4:11](#); [Php 2:16](#)).

1 Thessalonians 3:6

1Th 3:6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you—

New Paragraph.

2) Paul Wrote Them A Letter - v. 6-8 (cf. [1Th 5:27](#))

Now -- Very recent in time.

Timothy has come -- Silas and Timothy have joined Paul at Corinth, [Act 18:5](#).

Good news [tidings] -- This is the only place in the NT when this word is used in its secular sense. Usually it is referring to the *Gospel of Christ*.

Faith -- The attitude of trust in God and love.

Remember us kindly -- pleasant, kindly. The Thessalonians didn't believe the lies the enemy was telling.

Paul was concerned about the Thessalonians' perception of him ([1Th 2:3](#) and note). Timothy's news brought him relief; they had fond memories of Paul and desired to see him again.

Long to see us [greatly desiring] -- They had an intense feelings, a longing or desire to see Paul again.

1 Thessalonians 3:7

1Th 3:7 for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith.

For this reason [Therefore] -- for this reason.

All our distress and affliction -- The first of these terms implies outward constraint, stress of circumstances, or sometimes of duty; while the second commonly denotes trouble from men.

For similar and more extended combinations, see [2Co 6:4](#), [2Co 12:10](#).

1 Thessalonians 3:8

1Th 3:8 For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord.

(see last note on verse 7).

We live, if you-- Paul felt as though his life was wrapped up in the Thessalonian church. The emphasis is on the pronoun *you*, "*if you stand fast*."

Standing fast -- Continue firm in the practice of your faith. cf. [2Th 2:15](#). This one of Paul's favorite expression for staying faithful to God and His gospel message ([Gal 5:1](#); [Php 4:1](#); [2Th 2:15](#)).

It is a picture of an army that refuses to retreat even though it is being assaulted by the enemy.

Verses 7 and 8 indicate that God's Word is the tool for establishing young Christians in the faith. Note the way that Jesus used God's Word in [Mat 4:1-11](#). God's Word is the offensive weapon, the Sword, [Eph 6:17](#).

In 1Thessalonians every major doctrine is touched upon. God's Word is food to nourish us ([Mat 4:4](#)), light to guide us ([Psa 119:105](#)), and a weapon to defend us [Eph 6:17](#).

1 Thessalonians 3:9

1Th 3:9 For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God,

New Paragraph

3. Paul Prayed For Them - v. 9-12 ([1Sa 12:23](#))

Three things Paul prayed for:

- 1) That their **faith** might **mature** - v.10
- 2) That their **love** might **abound** - v.12
- 3) That their **life** might be **holy** - v.13

We see in this prayer:

- 1) The Gratitude he felt - v.9-10
- 2) The Guidance he sought - v.11
- 3) The Goal he mentioned - v.12-3.

Thanksgiving -- 1) We see Paul's gratitude to God.

Paul was thankful to God for the joy he felt knowing the brethren there were doing well, even through hardships, and holding firmly to the truth.

In verse 8 & 9 Paul is saying: "The news that Timothy brings from you gives new life to me, so much so that I can find no words sufficient to express my gratitude to God for the abounding joy which now fills my heart in thinking of you." (CBSC)

1 Thessalonians 3:10

1Th 3:10 as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

Earnestly night and day -- Paul's prayers were not just an occasional matter, it was habitual with him.

Paul prayed: 1) to see them again; 2) to give further support (teaching?) for the faith.

Paul was not criticizing them but rather acknowledging that they had not yet reached their full potential.

Paul probably is anticipating their need to be instructed on questions about Christ's return and those who have died ([1Th 4:13-18](#)). Since Paul cannot be there in person, he writes this letter to strengthen their faith in Christ.

Supply [perfect] -- complete, as one might repair or mend a fishing net; used in [Mat 4:21](#), of "mending" their nets.

NASV "equip", complete.

Supply what is lacking in your faith -- Was it more teaching, such that would strengthen their hope, devotion, and resolution, *or* was Paul wanting to impart some (more?) spiritual gifts to them, as was the indication in his letter to Romans, [Rom 1:11](#).

1 Thessalonians 3:11

1Th 3:11 Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you,

2) *The Guidance He Sought - v.11*

Now may our God -- There is a transition, by way of contrast, from the thought of Paul's own wish and longing, that has been so fervently uttered, to the thought of God, who alone can fulfil His servant's desire.

The prayers of [1Th 5:23](#) and [2Th 2:16](#) begin in the same style.

God and Father Himself -- Paul recognized the power behind providence. Satan had hindered Paul's plan to return to Thessalonica, [1Th 2:18](#), but he asks God to make a *path straight* for his return to Thessalonica.

Our Lord Jesus -- (Some MSS add *Christ*.) Paul's desire is that the Father and the Lord will "*direct*" his steps to Thessalonica.

Direct our way to you -- Literally, *make straight*. (guide, direct, remove all hindrances).

The verb is rendered "*guide*" in [Luk 1:79](#); and the only other example of it in the NT is [2Th 3:5](#). (In the LXX, [Psa 37:23](#)).

Incidentally, notice that the verse is singular thought it refers to both God the Father and the Lord Jesus. This was a way the NT writers asserted the deity of Jesus and stating that they are ONE in purpose and action, (cf. [1Th 1:1](#); [2Th 2:16](#)).

1 Thessalonians 3:12

1Th 3:12 and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you,

3. *The Goal Paul Mentioned - v.12-13.*

A. His request - v.12;

B. His Reason - v.13

Increase and abound in love -- for one another and all men. Inside and outside the church family. [2Co 9:13](#). Paul already commended the believers for their love (1 Thess 1:3). Now he prays that their love will increase. This love should extend not only to persecuted believers, but also to those who persecute believers.

Love .. for all -- In light of the fact that God loved the world and sent His son to die for man's sin ([Joh 3:16](#)), believers who were loved when they were unlovely (Rom. 5:8) are to love unbelievers also ([Mat 5:43-44](#)).

Other NT commands concerning "all men" include pursuing peace ([Rom 12:18](#)), doing good ([Gal 6:10](#)), being patient ([Php 4:5](#)), praying ([1Ti 2:1](#)), showing consideration ([Tit 3:2](#)), and honoring ([1Pe 2:17](#)).

1 Thessalonians

1Th 3:13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

So that [To the end] -- "so that", the goal.

Establish -- establish

Blameless in holiness. Paul prayed that there would be no grounds of accusation against them because of unholiness.

Note the relation between the Lord's Second Coming and one's stability or steadfastness in living a holy, unblameable, life in Christ.

At the coming -- Referring to the Lord's return at the day of the resurrection and judgment.

Saints -- "holy ones" could be angels ([2Th 1:7](#)), but in this context see [1Th 4:14](#), it is the saints who have died.

1) The Lord comes with angels in judgment - [2Th 1:7](#)

2) He comes with departed Christians and angels at the resurrection - [1Th 4:14](#); [Mar 8:38](#).

Note: That each chapter in First Thessalonians ends with a reference to the Lord's Coming.

1 Thessalonians

1Th 4:1 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.

III. Paul's Exhortation - chapters 4 & 5

How Every Church Should Walk

1. In Holiness - 4:1-8, v.7
2. In Harmony - 4:9-10
3. In Honesty - 4:11-12
4. In Hope - 4:13 - 5:11
5. In Helpfulness - 5:12-28

Finally [Furthermore] -- finally (not a conclusion, but getting around to the matter of their Christian walk, or manner of living.)

Brothers -- an affectionate word

We ask and urge you [Beseech and exhort] -- A two-fold injunction, practically synonymous, but the second is stronger.

In the Lord -- This teaching is from the Lord. To give added weight to his words, Paul appealed here to the fact that he wrote with the authority of Christ Himself ([1Th 4:2](#); [1Th 4:15](#); [1Th 5:27](#); [2Th 3:6](#); [2Th 3:12](#)).

As ye have received -- Paul had taught them this when with them

Live to please God -- God's will for His children is not only heaven when they die, but Christlikeness while they are living (cf. [Rom 8:28-29](#); [Gal 4:19](#); [Eph 1:4](#)). (cf. [1Th 2:4](#), [1Th 2:15](#); [2Co 5:9](#); [Eph 5:10](#), [Eph 5:17](#); [Col 1:10](#); [Heb 11:6](#); [Heb 13:15-16](#); [1Jn 3:22](#)).

More and more [abound] -- excel,. They were doing well but Paul urges them to continue to increase in their favor with God.

1. Walk in Holiness -- 4:1-8 (v.7)

- 1) to please God - v.1
- 2) to obey God - v.2-3
- 3) to glorify God - v.4 & 5
- 4) to escape judgment - v.6-8

1 Thessalonians 4:2

1Th 4:2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

1. Walk in Holiness -- 1) to please God - v.2-3

You know -- Here again is a reference to something Paul had taught them already in his ministry there.

Instructions [commandments] we gave you -- Paul appeals to the knowledge of the readers: *for it is well known to you.*

The Greek word indicates it was a *command* or *advice publicly given*. **G3852.**

Paul's following instruction about sexual immorality is not a matter of human philosophy. As an apostle, he speaks on behalf of Christ.

Through the Lord Jesus -- This speaks of the authority by which Paul preached. (see note on verse 1.)

1 Thessalonians 4:3

1Th 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;

1. Walk in Holiness -- 2) to obey God - v.2-3

Will of God -- God's plan for you (for your sanctification). God makes His desires known to His people so they will display His character to the world.

Sanctification -- "set apart", holiness, v. 3, v.4, see v.7. Set apart for God and separated by life and conduct from the unbelieving world about them. As Paul continues, he describe this "sanctified" life.

Abstain from sexual immorality [fornication] -- The word specifically means sexual intercourse between unmarried persons, but seems to be used here of *sexual immorality* in general for all “illicit sexual acts.” (No indication Paul had in mind a specific problem such as he dealt with in the church at Corinth.)

✚1 Thessalonians 4:4

1Th 4:4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,

1. Walk in Holiness -- 3) to glorify God - v.4-5

Each [every] one -- each one, Paul is speaking on the individual level.

Control his own body [vessel] -- his *own* vessel. *σκε ος*, G4632, see Thayer's description of the word. The positive side of holiness requires one to “learn to control his own body.”

Possess his own vessel [NKJV] -- Vessel. Literally it is a hollow vessel that contains something, ([2Co 4:7](#); [Heb 9:21](#)) but it is sometimes used figuratively. The Greek-Roman, Biblical concept is that the soul (spirit) of man resides in the body as in a vessel.

Two interpretations of the meaning of “*vessel*” in this context are usually offered.

1) The term is used by Peter to refer to a *wife* [1Pe 3:7](#). Some translations take it that it is used that way in this passage. Verse 6 then would mean, don't defraud a brother by stealing his wife. The Romans didn't consider fornication a sin unless it involved a “high ranking” wife of another Roman.

2) The term is used to refer to the *body*. Translating “possess” as referring to a man “controlling” his own passions and desires, we metaphorically understand the vessel as a man's body ([2Co 4:7](#)). Believers must use their bodies in a manner pleasing to God and abstain from sexual immorality.

How best to translate this word “*vessel*” in context? The translator should translate the word, it is not the position of the translator to give an interpretation. To translate it either “body” or “wife” is to give an interpretation, not a translation. Let the Bible student study for himself and see what the possible meaning could be.

My view (WG) is that the second understanding is most likely.

In holiness [sanctification] and honor -- The man is instructed to “control” or master the “passion of lust,” [1Th 4:5](#), of his own body. And in *honor*; for as lust dishonors and degrades the body ([Rom 1:24](#), [Rom 1:26](#); [1Co 6:15](#)), so the body's devotion to God in a life of purity raises it to “*honor*.”

See note on [1Th 4:3](#).

1 Thessalonians 4:5

1Th 4:5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;

Not in passion of lust [lust of concupiscence] -- The last verb of the previous verse (to *control*; to possess) is carried on into this clause: not to allow your body to behave in a state of lustful passion. This condition--the state of one immersed "in" wicked desire--is the opposite of "*holiness and honour*."

Passion -- The word "*passion*" signifies an overpowering feeling, to which the man yields himself and is borne along by evil as if he were just a passive instrument who has lost self-rule, and is the slave of his baser appetites. (Compare [Rom 7:5](#), "our sinful passions ... at work in our members" and [Rom 7:20](#), "it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.")

Like the Gentiles -- The Gentiles did not hold to the same high moral code that the OT scriptures demanded.

Who do not know God -- the Gentiles knew gods, but not the GOD! Gentiles were considered "heathen"; (cf. [Gal 4:8](#); [2Th 1:8](#); also [Psa 79:6](#); [Jer 10:25](#)) who know nothing of such holy and honorable behavior based on the law of Moses and the commands of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:6

1Th 4:6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you.

1. Walk in Holiness --

4) to escape Judgment. (cf [1Th 4:1](#); 1Th 4.4)

Transgress [Go beyond] -- *transgress, do wrong (cheat)*,

Wrong his brother -- *exploit, defraud*; It probably means by stealing the love of his brother's wife (and committing adultery).

The Greek word used here, *pleonekteo*, refers to taking advantage of someone, especially for financial or material gain. It is possible that Paul is concerned with believers taking advantage of one another in terms of finances.

However, the context of the passages suggests that Paul is still addressing the issue of sexual immorality.

This matter -- Lenski says this is a business term, and Paul is dealing with commercial matters; saying Christians must live pure moral live, sexually and ethically. The word is well translated "matter" and the context is to indicate what kind of "*matter, dealing, business*" is under consideration.

The Lord is the avenger -- This means it is God who ultimately works out just recompense for such sins (cf. [Col 3:4-7](#); [Heb 13:4](#)).

We forewarned you -- Paul had given similar instructions before while present with them.

Testified -- This is solemn testimony before God. The verb implies reference to God, as it is expressed in [2Ti 4:1](#), “*before God and Christ Jesus.*” Paul had expressly taught on this subject when present at Thessalonica, and expressed the solemn consequences of believers not living a social pure and sanctified life.

✚1 Thessalonians 4:7

1Th 4:7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.

Called -- called by the preaching of the gospel [2Th 2:14](#).

Uncleanness -- i.e. for purposes of impurity.

Holiness -- but unto sanctification, (reference is back to how we should “*walk*” v.1, in *sanctification*, same word as in v.3.)

✚1 Thessalonians 4:8

1Th 4:8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Disregards [rejecets, despiseth] -- “He that disregards this ..”

Not man, but God -- Paul's instruction about holiness is not from a human source, but from God, by inspiration through Paul. ([1Th 4:3](#); [Lev 11:45](#); [Lev 20:7](#); [1Pe 1:14-16](#)).

A final reason for compliance with the standards set forth in verses 4 - 5 is that they are God-given. Therefore rejection of them means rejecting not a human being, but God.

Gives -- gave; The participle in the Majority Text wold read, “*who has also given*”; The Greek text, NA26, reads as a present participle, which indicates *continuous giving*.

Gives his Holy Spirit -- Paul could perform miracles, and give powerful testimony by inspiration. Not only were mirculous gifts given by the Holy Spirit, but the message of godly living comes through God's Spirit.

See notes on [Eph 3:17](#).

To you [us] -- A larger number of Gk MSS reads “*us*” here. This word closes the sentence with an emphasis, is why some prefer “*you*.”

✚1 Thessalonians 4:9

1Th 4:9 Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,

New Paragraph

2. Walk in Harmony - v.9-10

Four Greek words for love.

"*eros*" = physical love, "erotic"

"*philo*" = affection, friendship, marriage

"*storge*" = family love, family relations

"*agape*" = noble, good will, benevolent, sacrificial, (God's love for us)

Love is said to be like the circulatory system of the body, and exercise makes the blood flow faster.

Now concerning [touching] -- Concerning; Is Paul now turning to give a response to a question? The wording corresponds to 1st Corinthians where a letter with questions had been directed to Paul.

Brotherly love -- *philadelphia* in v. 9, and *agapa* in later part of v.9. Brotherly love is the love within a brotherhood of believers.

The Greek word here, *philadelphia*, originally referred to affection among blood relatives. Christians adopted this word because they considered themselves the family of God.

Taught by God to love -- *agapa*; A noble love, sacrificial and benevolent. Taught through God's Word ([Psa 119:97-102](#)) and by God Himself to be His love for others (cf. [Rom 5:5](#); [1Jn 2:7-11](#); [1Jn 3:14](#); [1Jn 4:7-8](#); [1Jn 4:12](#)).

1 Thessalonians 4:10

1Th 4:10 for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more,

What you are doing -- The Thessalonian brethren themselves were showing their love for their believing brothers.

Macedonia -- Thessalonica was a prosperous commercial city and the capital of Macedonia. It was the natural centre of the Macedonian Churches--which would include Philippi, Berea, and if there were churches there, at Amphipolis and Apollonia, ([Act 17:1](#)) etc.

More and more -- Increase, abound still more. The Apostle repeats the exact phrase employed in [1Th 4:1](#).

1 Thessalonians 4:11

1Th 4:11 and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you,

3. Walk in Honesty -- v. 11-12

Aspire to live quietly [study] -- φιλοτιμεσθαι, (not the same Greek word as in [2Ti 2:15](#), but the idea is the same. "aim, endeavor, give diligent attention to" "to strive to bring something to love" "to be ambitious, to make it one's aim" "strive earnestly")

Note that this word has "*philo*" in it, and is a play on "*brother love*" in verse 9. In [Rom 15:20](#), Paul "*aim*" is Gospel pioneering, [2Co 5:9](#) used the "*aim*" of believers to be well-pleasing unto the Lord; and here in [1Th 4:11](#) of the "*aim*" of believers to be quiet, do their own business and work with their own hands. "***Make it one's aim***" would be a good translation in all of these passages.

Live quietly -- By discarding their idols ([1Th 1:9](#)), the Thessalonians abandoned many of their social, religious, and civic obligations. Since their response to the gospel already disrupted their former lives, Paul urges them not to make the matter worse.

Mind your own affairs -- Paul later deals with those who did not "mind their own business" at Thessalonica (cf. [2Th 3:6-15](#)).

And work with your hands -- The Greeks despised manual labor and had slaves.

Remember the historical occasion for the writing was that some in the church misunderstood Paul's preaching on the Second Coming and it is possible that some of the believers may have used Christ's future return as an excuse to stop working. However, the most likely case is that some of the poor believers had stopped being responsible for supporting themselves. Paul urges them to earn their own living instead of taking advantage of other believers' work.

Three reasons to work:

1) to provide for one's own family, [1Ti 5:8](#), and here v.12b.

2) to be able to give to those who have not, [Eph 4:28](#).

3) work is a blessing from God [Gen 2:15](#), (toil and sweat belongs to the curse, [Gen 3:17](#) ff.

And "work" is here commanded by inspiration.

A Jewish proverb, "He who doesn't teach his son a trade, teaches him to steal." Paul's trade was tent-making.

As we instructed [commanded] you -- Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business.

1 Thessalonians 4:12

1Th 4:12 so that you may live properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

Live properly [walk honestly] -- *Honorably*, (Greek adverb) behave properly, *becomingly*, decently, in a seemly manner. εὐσχημονῶς is "decently" in [1Co 14:40](#), "let all things be done ... " In this context it stands in contrast to that which would result in a bad testimony to unbelievers.

Before outsiders -- The "outsiders" would be non-Christians (cf. [Col 4:5](#); [1Ti 3:7](#)).

Be dependent on no one -- That you may be in need of anything, or anyone ([1Th 2:6](#)). The idea is that so that you may be no man's dependent.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

1Th 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

New Paragraph

4. Walk in Hope -- 4:13-5:11

Revelation -- 4:13, 15 we have God's Truth

Return -- 4:14-15 Christ is risen and will return

Resurrection -- 4:15-16

Reunion -- 4:17-18

Retribution -- 5:1-3

Readiness -- 5:4-11

4:13–18 The Thessalonians likely expressed concern that their deceased brothers and sisters in the Lord--and those who may die before His return--will miss out on Christ's return and the glorious future of the age to come (see v. 14 and note). Paul writes to reassure them that deceased believers will be raised to enjoy Christ's appearing. Christ will even give deceased believers priority (see v. 16).

We do not want you to be uninformed [ignorant] -- This was one of Paul's favorite ways of introducing a new and important subject. Cf. [Rom 1:13](#), [Rom 11:25](#), [1Co 10:1](#), [1Co 12:1](#), [2Co 1:8](#).

Brothers -- (Used in references above), a term conveying tenderness and affection.

Who are asleep -- A metaphor frequently used by Jesus, [Mar 5:39](#) of Jairus' daughter, in [Joh 11:11](#) of Lazarus.

"Sleep" serves as a euphemism for death in both the OT and NT, as well as in wider Jewish and Graeco-Roman literature, (e.g., [Deu 21:16](#); [Psa 13:3](#); [Joh 11:11-13](#); [Act 13:36](#); compare [2Ma 12:45](#), RSVA; Homer, *Iliad* 11.241).

The term *cemetery* is from the word that means "a place to sleep." What does the picture of death gain from the term "sleep"? After sleep, there is an awaking, therefore death is not an annihilation.

Grieve -- Be in sorrow. The verb "grieve" is a present tense, (cf. Eph. 2:12); believers must not continue to be grieved by earthly death because we know the truth of the gospel: (1) Jesus died for us; (2) the Spirit who raised Him will raise us; (3) He is coming back for us; and (4) those who have died are already with Him.

Who have no hope -- Our "Hope" is what this section is all about! The Greek word used here, *elpis*, does not refer to wishful thinking; it is the *confident expectation* that God will fulfill what He has promised.

Our **hope** is for a "resurrection" and eternal life.

RESURRECTION

[Joh 5:28-29](#) resurrection of the good and bad

[1Co 15:1](#) ff great entire chapter

[1Co 15:51-53](#) the living will be changed

[1Th 4:13](#) - 18 words of comfort to the righteous

Some Various Comings of Christ

***1 Emmanuel**, [Mat 1:23](#); [Joh 1:14](#); [Joh 6:38](#); [Gal 4:4](#) This was the coming of the Lord in the flesh, his birth at Bethlehem.

2 Pentecost, [Mat 16:28](#) ([Mar 9:1](#)) [Mar 14:62](#), [Mat 26:64](#) In some significant way it could be said that Christ also came on Pentecost representatively when he sent his promise of the Holy Spirit.

3 To Paul at His Conversion __ [Act 26:16](#), [Act 22:7-9](#) ; [1Co 15:8](#) The Lord came to Paul so he could see him alive after his crucifixion and thus qualify him to be an apostle.

4 In Visions -- To Paul at Jerusalem, [Act 22:17-18](#) (after conversion); At Corinth, [Act 18:9](#); again at Jerusalem, [Act 23:11](#)

5 AD 70, His coming in judgment upon the Jews for their rejection. [Mat 24:27](#), [Mat 24:30](#), [Mat 24:44](#), [Mat 24:39](#); [Mar 13:26-30](#); [Luk 21:20-27](#); [Heb 10:37](#); [Jas 5:8](#)

This brought an end to their nation, the temple, the physical priesthood coming from Levi, the end of animal sacrifices, etc. ("Last days"[of the Jewish dispensation] plural)

***6 The Resurrection Day** (His Second Coming, -- Cf. "Last Day" singular) [1Th 4:13](#) ff to [1Th 5:11](#); [1Co 15:23-24](#) ff; [Joh 14:1-3](#); [Joh 5:28](#); [Joh 11:24](#); [Joh 6:39](#); [Joh 6:40](#); [Joh 6:44](#);

✚ 1 Thessalonians 4:14

1Th 4:14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

For since [if] we believe -- Paul doesn't introduce the doctrine of the resurrection as anything new, but as something they already knew and believed in.

Since the date of 1st Thessalonians is very early, this verse is a creedal statement of the early church (cf. [1Co 15:3-4](#)).

Jesus died and rose again -- The core, foundation, of our HOPE! (cf. 1Cor. 15)

Those who are asleep -- "*were laid to sleep*"; sleep is used as a picture of death, as the body appears asleep.

In Jesus -- The important difference! "Asleep in Jesus" is better than just R.I.P.

God bring with him -- The spirits of dead saints who are with Jesus ([2Co 5:8](#); [2Co 5:6](#); [Php 1:23](#)) will come with him when he returns for the resurrection [1Th 3:13](#); [Ecc 12:7](#).

The Thessalonians were troubled about the state of believers who died before the Lord's return. Paul assures them that these believers are not lost, nor will they miss out on His return; rather, they will come with the Lord and be reunited with other believers [1Th 4:17](#); [1Th 5:10](#).

Where are the dead? See the extended note at [2Co 5:6](#); and the extended note at [2Co 5:8](#). cf. [1Th 3:13](#), [Php 1:23](#).

[The passages of [Luk 16:19-31](#) and [Luk 23:42-42](#) present a picture of the hades world before Christ's victory over the grave.]

Here we see the HOPE we have, and the WHY that we must **walk in holiness!**

1 Thessalonians 4:15

1Th 4:15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

4. Walk in HOPE

1) Revelation - 4:14-15 We have God's Truth

Word from the Lord -- Paul had this from the Lord (by revelation). cf. [1Co 15:51-54](#), [Gal 1:12](#); Jesus taught on this subject, [Joh 5:28-29](#); [Joh 14:1-3](#); Not all of Jesus' words had been recorded.

We -- An editorial "we", Paul didn't mean to teach that he personally would be alive when Jesus returned. On other occasions he identified himself with those who would rise from the dead, [1Co 6:14](#), [2Co 4:14](#).

Precede -- to go before, to go ahead, ([1Th 3:13](#), [Ecc 12:7](#)), Paul assures the Thessalonians that the hope of Christ's return and the resurrection of believers are based on God's promises. These words are intended to console.

Coming of the Lord -- This is reference to the "second" coming, or the return of the Lord - [1Th 1:10](#); [1Th 4:14-15](#). The "second" coming (return) of the Lord is the time of the resurrection and the judgment.

Fallen asleep -- Those who have died

1 Thessalonians 4:16

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Walk in Hope See note on [1Th 4:13](#).

2) Return - 4:14-15

Lord himself -- Refers to Jesus. The Greek expression used here emphasizes that this is a personal visitation by the Lord Jesus, not just His angelic messengers.

Will descend -- A sudden manifestation. This should not be understood in a spatial sense at all. This manifestation will be upon the whole world, not just a part of it. No words can adequately convey to our finite minds a full understanding of how the Lord's return can be pictured.

A cry of command [shout .. voice .. trump] -- Three unique sounds to accompany Jesus' return. [Joh 11:43](#). Whether these sounds are literal, or figurative to indicate an "awesome" event, either way, it is a very awesome event! [1Co 15:52](#) "last trump". cf. voice of the archangel, Michael at the judgment, [Jud 1:9](#), and [Dan 10:13](#), [Dan 10:21](#), [Rev 12:7](#).

Shout -- a commanding shout. (As the words of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus.)

Voice of an archangel -- Probably refers to the archangel Michael (see [Jud 1:9](#)). "A shout of command," "the voice of the archangel," and "the trumpet of God" may be referring to the same thing--a great acclamation meant to herald the returning King.

Archangel -- Very little is known about the organization or rank of angels (cf. [Col 1:17](#)). While only Michael is named as an archangel ([Jud 1:9](#)), there seems to be more than one in the angelic ranks ([Dan 10:13](#)).

Perhaps it is Michael, the archangel, whose voice is heard as he is identified with Israel's resurrection in [Dan 12:1-3](#).

Sound of the trumpet of God -- Announcing the Lord's arrival. Paul's language describes a visible and audible event.

Dead .. rise first -- The spirits' dead bodies will be resurrected (before we ascend, v. 17 "caught up") so there is a "reunion" of the spirits of those who have died with a new resurrected body. (For a description of that resurrected body see [1Co 15:42-50](#).)

First -- Those dead will enjoy their new resurrected body before those living experience their new changed spiritual body, v.17, [1Co 15:51-53](#).

Walk in Hope See note on [1Th 4:13](#).

2) Return - 4:14-15

3) Resurrection - 4:15-16

✚1 Thessalonians 4:17

1Th 4:17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Walk in Hope - 4:13 - 5:11

3) Resurrection - 4:15-16

4) Reunion - 4:17-18

Reunion of the spirit with a new body.

Reunion of those alive with those who have departed. (Another indication that we will know each other in/after the resurrection and in heaven.)

Reunion with our Lord, a glorious meeting as with a royal person.

We who are alive -- Those still alive at our Lord's return. The "we" is general, Paul is not saying that he personally will still be alive when the Lord returns.

Caught up together -- After the resurrection of the bodies of those spirits returning with Christ, the living saints will be transformed in a moment "the twinkling of an eye" and be "caught away" or carried away, ([G726](#)) to meet the Lord in the air.

From the Latin comes the term "rapture" which has become a favorite word of the premillennialists, and is generally mis-used by them.

Clouds -- His coming is pictured with the "clouds" of heaven, cf. [Act 1:9-11](#), a picture often used by Jesus himself, with the metaphor being changed to a "flaming fire" in [2Th 1:7-8](#), another picture that is often associated with the Lord's coming in judgment.

Meet in the air -- Not to dwell with him "in the air" but then to accompany him to the saint's new home in the place prepared for them, [Joh 14:1-3](#).

So we will always be with the Lord -- This addresses the believers' primary concern: separation from Christ and other fellow believers. This point is reiterated in [1Th 4:18](#).

[Ever be with the Lord] -- Three important points:

- 1) with the Lord, a "glorious meeting" *παρουσιαν parousia* (v.15) as with a royal person.
- 2) an everlasting meeting;
- 3) "together" with friends and family.

✠ 1 Thessalonians 4:18

1Th 4:18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Wherefore -- Because of the truth that we now know about the matter of "sleeping" saints.

Comfort -- The Christian's HOPE is to share in this resurrection. Not only did the words of this passage comfort the weeping and the bereaved in Thessalonica, but they are still doing so after some 20 centuries have rolled away. They are just as appropriate now in comforting the hearts of the bereaved as in ancient Thessalonica.

The truth about our Lord's return (the Second Coming) gives strength in time of sorrow ([1Th 4:13](#)).

These words -- God's word is comforting, the Scriptures are the proper place to go to to be comforted of God, cf. [Luk 24:17](#); [Luk 24:27](#), [Luk 24:32](#).

✠ 1 Thessalonians 5:1

1Th 5:1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you.

5:1-11 Paul continues discussing the subject of **the Day of the Lord** - but now turns to another question that the Thessalonians had raised--the timing. Paul dismisses the need for speculation.

Instead, he urges believers to be alert and self-controlled as they live in expectation of the Day of the Lord.

Concerning the times and the seasons -- **Times** = "*chronoi*"; **seasons** = "*kairoi*"; The NASB translates it "epochs," (The emphasis is on the nature of the time -- qualitatively, a definite point in time) [Mar 13:32](#).

This phrase refers to a single idea--the events that would allow a person to know when the "Day of the Lord" was at hand. But Paul does not need to write the Thessalonians about such things. Knowing how to live in preparation for the Lord's return is more important than knowing the timing of His return ([Act 1:6-7](#)).

Many of them expected the Lord to come in their lifetime and were confused and grieved when their fellow believers died before His coming.

You have no need -- Why was there no need for Paul to write about this? Because he had already informed them when with them. The important this is to be ready for whenever that day comes.

So Paul exhorted them to live godly lives in light of coming judgment on the world, rather than to be distracted by probing into issues of prophetic timing.

1 Thessalonians 5:2

1Th 5:2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

You yourselves are fully aware -- Paul did not need to write the Thessalonians about such things for he had informed them when he was present with them.

The day of the Lord -- Time of judgment and retribution, and the resurrection.

1) The term "Day of the Lord" is used in both the OT and NT to describe near historical judgments. It spoke of God's wrath being poured out upon Judah and Jerusalem for their rebellion against God. [Joe 1:15](#), [Joe 2:1](#), [Oba 1:15](#), [Zep 1:14](#), [Isa 2:12](#), [Isa 13:6](#), [Eze 13:5](#).

2) While the "*Day of Lord*" in some prophetic passages refer to God's judgment in a historical setting, it here refers to his Second Coming, the day of the resurrection spoken of in the previous chapter. (See [Joh 5:28-29](#).)

This *Day of the Lord* involved about three elements:

- 1) It would come suddenly and unexpectedly
- 2) There would be a resurrection of the dead.
- 3) It would be a time when God would reveal his wrath and bring judgment. ([2Co 5:10](#)).

Like a thief in the night -- Jesus described His return this same way ([Mat 24:43](#); [Rev 3:3](#); [Rev 16:15](#)). His return will surprise some people, but believers must be ready.

1 Thessalonians 5:3

1Th 5:3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

For while -- Rather, *when they are saying* (RV). In the very act of their saying "Peace and safety" -- just when men of the world pronounce everything secure and quiet--then the thief comes.

Sudden destruction -- *suddenly*, [G160](#); a Greek word found only in these two places in the NT, suddenly, as a snare, (surprising one), [Luk 21:34](#).

Peace and security -- A time when people feel safe and secure in their rebellious and sinful course of life.

The Roman Empire used the phrase "peace and safety" in its propaganda to promote the idea of Roman Peace (Pax Romana).

False prophets in the OT often fraudulently forecast a bright future, preaching "peace" in spite of the imminence of God's judgment ([Jer 6:14](#); [Jer 8:11](#); [Jer 14:13-14](#); [Lam 2:14](#); [Eze 13:10](#), [Eze 13:16](#); [Mic 3:5](#)),

labor pains [travail] -- birth pangs, which come *suddenly*. The Lord used this same illustration in the Olivet discourse (see [Mat 24:8](#)). It portrays the inevitability, suddenness, inescapable nature, and painfulness of the Day of the Lord.

They will not escape -- [2Th 1:9](#).

1 Thessalonians

1Th 5:4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

Darkness -- A figure for being in ignorance and un-informed. Paul had taught these truths at Thessalonica, so they were not in ignorance of what he is now repeating.

Surprise you like a thief -- A thief is one who gives no warning of his coming.

[There were signs and non-signs that Jesus warned for the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem. cf. Matt 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. But there will be no signs forecasting the Lord's second coming, it is unexpected, as a thief.]

1 Thessalonians 5:5

1Th 5:5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

Children of light -- sons. The Greek phrase used here, *huiioi photos*, refers to people characterized by light. In the OT, light symbolizes God's favor ([Pro 4:18](#); [Psa 112:4](#)) and truth ([Psa 119:130](#)).

("Children of Light" a favorite term in the literature of the Dead Sea Scroll sect.) See "son, son of ..." in the note at [Act 4:36](#).

Children of the day -- The believers at Thesalonica walked in the light. This confirms positively what was stated by way of denial in verse 4. They cannot be "in darkness" who are "sons of light" because they "walk in the light," knowing that Christ is going to return.

We are -- By a casual change from "*you*" to "*we*" Paul takes his place with his readers in accepting the exhortation of verse 6.

Not of the night or of the darkness -- To reinforce his point, Paul returns to the negative side. Darkness symbolizes both ignorance and evil. The Thesalonica brethren were neither.

This metaphorical dualism of light versus darkness is characteristic of the Ancient Near East. It is a recurrent theme in the Apostle John's writings and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

6. READINESS -- 5:4-11

1. Suddenness -- v.3
2. Soberness -- v.6
3. Sleepiness -- v.7
4. Encouragement -- v.4-8
5. Edification -- v. 9-11

1 Thessalonians 5:6

1Th 5:6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

So then [Therefore] -- So then.

Let us not sleep -- Not physical sleep, nor death, but a moral slumber as one unconcerned and not watchful.

Earlier in this letter, Paul used a Greek word for "sleep," *koimao*, metaphorically to describe those who have died ([1Th 4:13](#)). In this verse, he uses a different Greek word, *katheudo*, also translated "sleep," to refer to being unaware of God, His workings, and His return. Cf. [Rom 13:11-12](#); [Psa 13:3](#); [Mar 14:38](#); [Col 4:2](#).

As others do -- The world is willfully ignorant of the coming Day, for God has amply warned mankind, [2Pe 3:5](#); [2Co 5:10](#).

Keep awake [watch] and be sober -- Be alert. "Keep awake" or "watch" is the mental side, and "be sober" is the moral side of the attitude believers should maintain in view of the coming Day.

1 Thessalonians 5:7

1Th 5:7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night.

Those who sleep -- Night was the time for both sleeping and drunken parties. Paul may draw on the sayings of Jesus in [Mat 24:42](#), [Mat 24:49](#) and [Mat 26:45](#), besides the obvious [Mat 24:43](#).

Sleep at night -- Night time is the normal time for sleeping. Children of the day, are those watchful. Children of the night at those given to all manner of evil and dissipation.

Those who get drunk -- To become intoxicated by alcohol. Drunkenness impairs judgment and leads to recklessness ([Eph 5:18](#); [Rom 13:13](#)). The night is devoted by them to revelry and dissipation.

Drunk at night -- Evil and wickedness seems to be more prevalent in the night, or with darkness, or among those not alert and watchful.

Drunkenness signifies the condition of a soul enslaved by evil. We catch here another echo of our Lord's warnings: "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap." ([Luk 21:34](#); comp. [1Th 5:3](#) above; also [Luk 12:45-46](#); and [Rom 13:13](#)).

1 Thessalonians 5:8

1Th 5:8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

But since we belong to the day -- Since we are "children of light" we are alert and watchful.

Be sober -- Paul pictured the Christian life in military terms (as he often does) as being a life of soberness (alertness) and proper equipping.

Breastplate of faith and Love -- The "breastplate" protected the chest area-- the place of the vital organs of the body. "**Faith**" is an essential protection against temptations, because it is trust in God's promise, plan, and truth. It is unwavering belief in God's Word that protects us from temptation's arrows.

For a helmet the hope of salvation -- [Eph 6:14-17](#) Paul was especially fond of military metaphors. Being faithful to God our salvation is sure, nothing can take it away ([Rom 13:11](#)). Paul again combined **faith**, **love**, and **hope** (cf. 1:3). See notes on [Eph 6:10-17](#).

The helmet was armor that covered the head and cheek bones. It was made of bronze metal and leather.

Though the breastplate and helmet were Roman military apparel, the similarity to the Isaiah passage of [Isa 59:17](#) is probably Paul's reference source.

1 Thessalonians 5:9

1Th 5:9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Not destined [appointed] us for wrath -- Believers should not consider persecution to signify God's wrath; for faith and suffering are both part of the Christian life ([Php 1:29](#); [1Th 3:3](#)).

The word "**wrath**" is the same wrath referred to in [1Th 1:10](#) ("*the wrath to come*" see notes there). In this context it is obvious that this **wrath** refers to God's eternal wrath, not some temporal difficulties and hardships. (cf [Rom 5:9](#)).

But to obtain salvation -- "**Obtaining**" (G4047) securing, making a thing absolutely one's own,-- as in [2Th 2:14](#) (see note), "*the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Salvation points to 1) something we are saved from; and 2) something we are saved to.

In Paul's writing it generally includes the entire blessings from God for this life as well as eternal life to come.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ -- Such "salvation" is made possible by Christ, and what he did for us, as the next verse tells us.

✚1 Thessalonians 5:10

1Th 5:10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.

Who died for us -- The Lord Jesus Christ died as the substitute for our sins. Cf. [Gal 1:4](#); [2Co 5:15](#); [2Co 5:21](#).

Whether we are awake or asleep -- We are awake, or asleep. Here is Paul's point, that whether as saints physically alive or those dead, all will participate in that great day and together live with Him forever.

We might live with him -- Neither life nor death can separate believers from Christ (compare [Rom 8:35-39](#)). To live eternally with God in heaven in our goal.

The Resurrection Day (His Second Coming, -- Cf. "Last Day" singular) [1Th 4:13](#) ff to [1Th 5:11](#); [1Co 15:23-24](#) ff; [Joh 14:1-3](#); [Joh 5:28](#); [Joh 11:24](#); [Joh 6:39](#); [Joh 6:40](#); [Joh 6:44](#);

✚1 Thessalonians 5:11

1Th 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Therefore -- On this account. Because God has provided us a Savior.

Encourage [comfort] -- Encourage and comfort those who have friends or family who have died ([1Th 4:18](#)) with the wonderful words of the resurrection and our hope in Christ ([1Th 5:10](#)).

Build one another [yourselves] up -- The word "**edify**", a favorite word of Paul's, points to the church as a house, and "*a dwelling place for God by the Spirit*" ([Eph 2:22](#)).

Each believer contributes to the welfare of others and providing strength for the whole. In this concept lies the germ of the apostle's picture of the church, which he unfolds in [1Co 12:12-27](#), and still further in the letter to the Ephesians.

Just as [even as] -- They were already doing this. These repeated acknowledgements attest the high quality and spirit of this church. It excelled especially in mutual kindness and helpfulness.

✚1 Thessalonians 5:12

1Th 5:12 We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,

NEW PARAGRAPH _ _ _ _ _

WALK IN HELPFULNESS -- 5:12-28

1. Esteem the Leaders -- v.12-13
2. Encourage others -- v.14
3. Ever follow that which is good -- v.1-19

- v. 12-13 1) Esteem the Leaders --
a) accept; b) appreciate; c) love and d) obey them.

We ask you [beseech] -- Paul phrases this as a gentle request.

Respect [know] -- In the sense of appreciate.

Who labor among you -- *diligently* labor. Paul here seems to be describing the work of the elders.

And are over you -- Literally, *preside over you, those who have charge*. Only elders (bishops, overseers, shepherds) are ever spoken of as being "over us" or to have the "rule" over church (family) members in the Lord. So these are the ones who are meant here.

While the letter written back to another Macedonian church (Philippi) is addressed to include the church overseers (bishops) the church at Thessalonica must have also had such leaders.

Admonish you -- Give you instructions and exhortations; part of the work of elders or bishops, is to shepherd, or feed the flock ([Act 20:28](#) KJV; [1Pe 5:1-3](#); [Tit 1:7-11](#)).

✚1 Thessalonians 5:13

1Th 5:13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

Esteem [recognize] them very highly in love -- These shepherds of the flock are to be honored, appreciated, and esteemed. Their example is to be followed, their admonishments and warnings heeded, and their guidance to be followed.

Be at peace among yourselves -- [Some MSS lack this phrase.] Because Paul next gives an exhortation to "admoish the unruly" (KJV).

1 Thessalonians 5:14

1Th 5:14 And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

2) Encourage others -- v.14

the unruly; the fainthearted; the weak

Exhort -- Urge.

Admonish -- Give warning, instructions and exhort.

Idle [unruly] -- [See. [2Th 3:6](#)] disorderly, "out of step." [G813](#); Again, we see one of Paul's military terms for a soldier who is walking out of rank, or failing to keep step.

Paul seems to be referring to those believers at Thessalonica who refused to work and support themselves. Some apparently took advantage of their fellow Christians and needed to be brought back in line.

Encourage [comfort] -- Encourage, help and support the fainthearted.

Fainthearted -- The "feeble-minded" of the KJV is poor terminology in today's society. The word itself is [ο'λιγο' ψυχος](#) [G3642](#); and literally is "*little spirited*" seems to mean those with doubts who needed encouragement, lest they become quitters.

Help [support] --

The weak -- This often indicates those who are not fully taught or not living up to the example of a believer; to help them then would be to teach and train them in the way they should live and behave.

Be patient -- Be gentle and long-suffering, bear with each other. [1Ti 6:11](#).

1 Thessalonians 5:15

1Th 5:15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

Repay evil for evil [render] -- This is not talking about judges who must render out judgment for criminals. It is speaking of individual levels, cf. [Rom 12:17-19](#). The Thessalonians may have been tempted to retaliate against those who persecuted them. Paul advises them against this ([Mat 5:39-40](#); [Rom 12:19](#)).

Seek to do good [ever follow] -- The idea of "seek" here is to make it your *aim and pursuit*. The "good" here is to do that which is "beneficial."

To one another and to everyone -- Patience, forgiveness and acts of goodness must prevail between all the people. Believers must extend to others (i.e., believers and unbelievers) the same goodness the Lord has shown them.

Paul's Point: *Be benevolent toward all -- [Gal 6:10](#); [2Co 9:13](#).

3) Ever Follow That Which Is Good -- v.15-19

- 1) Be Happy & positive -- v.16, 26, 28
- 2) Be Prayerful -- v. 17, 25
- 3) Be Grateful -- v. 18
- 4) Be Worshipful -- v.19 - 20; (Reverent toward God's Word)
- 5) Be Ready --
abstain from evil (21-22), Read - v.27; Be whole, v.23-26

1 Thessalonians 5:16

1Th 5:16 Rejoice always,

Rejoice always [evermore] -- Paul voices a theme that is characteristic of the NT writings, beginning with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount ([Mat 5:11-12](#); see also [Act 5:41](#); [Act 16:25](#); [Php 1:18](#); [Php 4:4](#)).

The uniqueness of Christian joy is that it can exist even under adverse circumstances. Paul states the paradox succinctly in [2Co 6:10](#); "*sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*"

- 1) Be Happy -- [1Th 5:15](#).
- 2) Be Prayerful - [1Th 5:16](#).

1 Thessalonians 5:17

1Th 5:17 pray without ceasing,

Pray without ceasing -- This does not mean pray repetitiously or continuously without a break (cf. [Mat 6:7-8](#)), but rather pray persistently (cf. [Luk 11:1-13](#); [Luk 18:1-8](#)) and regularly (cf. [Eph 6:18](#); [Php 4:6](#); [Col 4:2](#), [Col 4:12](#)).

- 1) Be Happy -- [1Th 5:15](#).
- 2) Be Prayerful - [1Th 5:16](#).
- 3) Be Grateful -- [1Th 5:17](#).

1 Thessalonians 5:18

1Th 5:18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Give thanks in all circumstances [everything] -- This is something Paul taught by example as well as precept; see [1Th 1:2](#); [1Th 3:9-10](#); and compare [Php 4:6](#); [Col 4:2](#).

"In all circumstances" means even in persecution and shame, and while suffering for Christ's sake; [Php 1:29](#); [2Co 12:9-10](#).

Being ungrateful is a trait of unbelievers (cf. [Rom 1:21](#); [2Ti 3:1-5](#)).

This is the will of God -- "*This is the will of God*" includes what has been said in verses 16 and 17.

- 1) Be Happy -- 1Th_5:15.
- 2) Be Prayerful - 1Th_5:16.
- 3) Be Grateful -- 1Th_5:17.

✚ 1 Thessalonians 5:19

1Th 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.

Do not quench -- A term used for putting out a fire. The thought is that the child of God should not put out the spiritual zeal within. Such fire might be quenched with a love for the world, for riches or pleasures of this life. cf. [Mat 13:22](#). Thus a reference to "spiritual life."

The Spirit -- Question: Is this a reference to man's own spirit, or to the Spirit of God? Some think this is probably referring to the Spirit's various miraculous gifts.

- 1) Be Happy -- 1Th_5:15.
- 2) Be Prayerful - 1Th_5:16.
- 3) Be Grateful -- 1Th_5:17.
- 4) Be Worshipful -- [1Th 5:19-20](#) (Be reverent towards God's Word.)

✚ 1 Thessalonians 5:20

1Th 5:20 Do not despise prophecies,

Do not despise prophecies -- The word here is *propheteia*, and in this context it probably refers to an utterance inspired by the Holy Spirit for the edification of the church community ([1Co 14:4](#)).

Some believers at Thessalonica may have felt uncomfortable with the spiritual gift of prophecy because of their past experience with idolatry ([1Th 1:9](#)). Some religious cults—such as the cult of the Greek god Dionysus—practiced a form of pagan prophecy that involved ecstatic behavior.

It may not necessarily be a reference to spiritual gifts, but simply to "teaching" that came from God's Word (cf. [Mat 13:14](#); [2Pe 1:19-21](#); [Rev 1:3](#); [Rev 22:7](#); [Rev 22:18-19](#)). Be like the people of Berea who "searched the Scriptures daily." [If you want to know what the sin one commits by missing the Bible study classes, this would be it.]

✚ 1 Thessalonians 5:21

1Th 5:21 but test everything; hold fast what is good.

But test [prove] everything -- Examine what is being taught, is it from God's Word?

If the prophetic activity ([1Th 5:19-20](#)) is referring to spiritual gifts, then they are to test the legitimacy of them. In 1st Corinthians, Paul mentions the need for discernment within the church ([1Co 12:10](#); [1Co 14:29](#)).

Hold fast what is good -- When God's Word is preached or read, it is to be received with great seriousness. Be faithful and true to it; cling to the Word and follow it.

The word for "good" is the Greek term *kalos* (good or beautiful), not *agathos* ("good, beneficial, sacrificial") as in [1Th 5:15](#).

1 Thessalonians 5:22

1Th 5:22 Abstain from every form of evil.

Abstain -- The verb tense is in the form of a command, and in the present tense meaning to "keep on abstaining."

Every form [all appearances] -- During the council at Jerusalem, the apostles agreed that the Gentiles should abstain from sexual immorality, from eating meat sacrificed to idols, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and blood ([Act 15:20](#)). Paul broadens the instruction--all evil must be avoided.

Some think that in this context of spiritual gifts and prophecy that something might be falsely attributed to the Holy Spirit ([2Th 2:9-10](#)). And that Paul is here countering this, saying "hold on to" what the Spirit reveals as good, but "avoid" (literally "hold yourselves free from") every kind of evil that tries to parade as a genuine representation of the Spirit. (EBCNT)

5) Be Ready ..

Abstain from evil - v.22

See [Rom 1:27](#) note on **GAYS (Homosexuals, Sodomites) and Lesbians** In The Bible

1 Thessalonians 5:23

1Th 5:23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now may the God of peace -- While the Roman emperor brought "peace" to the city of Thessalonica, the Thessalonians must ultimately look to God for peace. "The God of peace" is a favorite designation with Paul [Rom 15:33](#); [Rom 16:20](#).

It is an interesting study to read all the passages where Paul says that God is "the God of ..." peace, hope, patience, consolation and grace, etc.

Sanctify you completely [wholly] -- Entirely, see note at [1Th 4:3](#). In his closing benediction Paul acknowledges God as the One who can separate us from sin to a holy life.

Whole spirit and soul and body -- Man is spoken of in a triune fashion, spirit-soul-body.

In this case the **spirit** speaks of the inner man, the **soul** speaks to his physical life or breath, and the **body** speaks to his casing or house. [cf [Gen 2:7](#)] Often the term *soul*, (the physical life of man) is used figurative or metaphorically for the inner man, the spirit. Sometimes it simply refers to *people*, cf. [Act 2:41](#).

Be kept .. at the coming .. -- Paul's prayer seems to wish that they would live (physically) to see the return of the Lord. This seems to have given them the wrong impression that the "Great Day of the Lord," his physical Second Coming, was at hand. The Lord's coming in judgment upon the Jews and Jerusalem would be in AD 70 because of their rejection of Christ when he came to them. Second Thessalonians seems to have been written to correct a wrong impression that the return of Christ was immediate.

See note on [Joh_16:7](#) for a note of the "*Work of the Trinity*" from the ESV Study Bible.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

1Th 5:24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

He who calls you is faithful -- God is true and trustworthy.

Surely do it -- He can bring it to pass. Paul didn't know when Christ's second coming would be, but he seems to be praying that it would be in the lifetime of the Thessalonian brethren to whom he is writing ([1Th 5:23](#); [1Th 4:17](#)).

1 Thessalonians 5:25

1Th 5:25 Brothers, pray for us.

Pray for us -- Paul has just prayed for his readers ([1Th 5:23](#); [1Th 1:2](#); [1Th 3:10-13](#)); he desires that they in turn should pray for him.

Some ancient authorities, very suitably, reads "us also" (R. V. margin): pray also for us,--i.e. as we do for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:26

1Th 5:26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

Holy kiss -- A kiss upon the cheek, or both cheeks, was a common greeting in the ancient world. A kiss exchanged upon greeting could also symbolize reconciliation ([Gen 45:15](#); [Luk 15:20](#)). In the Christian context, it expresses unity ([Rom 16:16](#); [2Co 13:12](#)).

1 Thessalonians 5:27

1Th 5:27 I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

Under oath [charge] -- *Charge* is much stronger than *adjure*. Paul's meaning in that culture would be as much as to say, "*I put you on your oath before the Lord to do this:*"

Have this letter read -- Public reading of the Word of God is the foundation of spiritual growth. cf. [Gal 4:16](#); [2Th 3:14](#); [Rev 1:3](#); [1Th 2:13](#).

1 Thessalonians 5:28

1Th 5:28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

The grace .. -- This is Paul's usual form for a final benediction. He asks that the Lord's favor (and implied blessings) would be with them.