



# DEEPER PRAYER

Anglican Diocese of Bunbury 2022

# Deeper Prayer

## Learning from St Paul

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Printed copies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians

Visual Summaries of 1 and 2 Thessalonians produced by The Bible Project

### Bibliography

“Unlocking the Bible”, by David Pawson

“Pray Continually” – Lecture by Andrew Malone, Ridley College

‘The Bible Background Commentary: New Testament’ by Craig S Keener

gotquestions.org – Church at Thessalonica

thebibleproject.com – 1 and 2 Thessalonians

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## Introduction

“Deeper Prayer: Learning from Paul” has been specially written for the Diocese of Bunbury’s strategy to grow and deepen our prayer lives. The course can be used at any time of the year, either in a small group, or by individuals. It can also be used as a focus for prayer during Lent. Lent is a time traditionally used for self-examination and developing spiritual practices in preparation for Easter. These studies will lead to self-examination as well as prayer for others, since we cannot pray things for others that we are not willing to pray for ourselves.

The course runs for 9 weeks, while Lent lasts for 6 weeks. If you wish to condense the studies to 6 weeks, it is recommended that you study Week 1 and then the 5 most pertinent studies for yourself or, if you are doing the studies in a group, the ones most pertinent for your context. Alternatively, you could start the studies 3 weeks before Lent begins.

The studies focus on the two **Letters to the Thessalonians**. Many of the themes for prayer in these letters are taken up elsewhere in the Bible, but for the sake of simplicity, cross references to other Bible passages have generally not been used. Neither do the studies follow the letters chapter by chapter but rather look at how Paul talks about and models prayer. This is to allow for the focus to rest on prayer itself: what we pray for and why, and then to practice deeper prayer.

It is possible that bible study can lead to head knowledge but no real change of heart or practice. In order to grow and deepen our prayer lives, we need to make time to pray -not just in our meetings or devotional times but also throughout the week. At the end of each study, a section of notes, called GO DEEPER, give ideas how to do this and it is important to make time for these.

Paul says more than once in his letters to the Thessalonians that he has been a ‘model’ for them to ‘imitate’(eg 2 Thess 3v9). It’s clear that Paul did not pray things for the Thessalonians that he was not willing to do himself. As we go through these studies we will realise that we must do the same. It also becomes apparent that sometimes we ourselves might have a part to play in the answers to our prayers for other people. God may want to work through us to bless, encourage and strengthen others. As a result, these study notes not only draw us deeper into prayer, but also draw us deeper into living out our faith, as Paul and the Thessalonians did.

Week 1’s study requires more time than the others. If you are studying in a group you may need to make more time than usual for the study, or consider asking your group members to do Week 1 at home and then start your time together with Week 2.

The appendix includes printed copies of the two letters. You may like to use these to highlight or underline salient points – or even use colour codes for the various themes, which are scattered throughout the letters.

The visual summaries in the appendix come from the Bible Project and may need to be printed on A3 paper for easier reading. They go with the Bible Project’s excellent video summaries on the two letters, which can be found at [thebibleproject.com](http://thebibleproject.com)

## Week 1 – Introduction to the Letters to the Thessalonians

Thessalonica was a prominent city in Macedonia (in modern-day Greece) in Paul's day, and part of the Roman Empire. It was a bustling port on the Aegean Sea and a principal stop on the Ignatian Way, a major Roman road. Its population was mainly a mix of Greeks, Romans and Jews. Paul and Silas travelled to Thessalonica from Philippi on Paul's second missionary journey to preach the good news about Jesus. They spent three weeks teaching in the Jewish synagogue, but most of the Thessalonian Jews became indignant and formed a mob to drive the men out of the city. However, "some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women" (Acts 17:4). That was the beginning of the church at Thessalonica.

Due to the short time he had spent in Thessalonica, Paul was concerned about the church there. He tried to return to them "again and again—but Satan blocked our way" (1 Thessalonians 2:18), so while Paul was in Corinth with his companions Silas and Timothy, he wrote two letters to them, letters now called 1 and 2 Thessalonians. They are believed to be the first New Testament letters that Paul wrote (about AD50)

### Why use these letters to learn about prayer?

- Although these letters are relatively short, they contain much about prayer. Paul talks about prayer in four out of 5 chapters in the first letter and all three chapters of the second letter.
- Paul models prayer for the believers in these letters. He tells them what he prays about, peppers his teaching points with prayer and asks the Thessalonians to pray for him. Paul was teaching the new believers about prayer as well as doctrine.
- Paul was addressing ordinary people like us. Although there is a cultural gap to bridge, the humanity of the letters make them easy to relate to. If Paul were here today he would probably pray the same things for us.
- The letters are very practical and are related to real, every-day life. The issues the early Christians faced are not much different to ours.

### Getting Started

**Read through the whole of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.** You can listen to the letters being read aloud with a Bible App, a Bible CD or via the internet on [biblica.com](https://www.biblica.com)<sup>1</sup>. It takes about 10 minutes to read through the first letter and 6 minutes to read the second letter. If you can, **as you read through the letters, highlight or underline the parts about prayer.** This will make it easier to refer back to these verses later. You may like to use a printed copy of the letters (see Appendix).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.biblica.com/resources/niv-audio-bible-listen-online-for-free/>

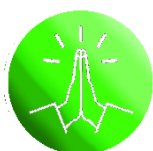


## CONSIDER/DISCUSS

1. How would you describe Paul's relationship with the Christians in Thessalonica?
2. Do you have any close relationships with other Christians? Write down here the names of some Christians or Christian groups with whom you have a special connection. (This doesn't necessarily mean a long connection – Paul spent only about three weeks with the Thessalonians and yet within this short time he had made a deep connection with them).

3. From the list of names or groups of people you have written in your answer to Q3, choose at least one that you would like to commit to pray for over the course of this study. Write their name/names here:

We will be focusing our learning on how to pray for other Christians (including ourselves), so it is best to choose someone to pray for who is already a Christian.



Use the prayer below or pray in your own words for that person/s and for yourself as you begin these studies.

Heavenly Father, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_ (name/s). Thank you for their faith and love for you and for me. I want to commit myself to praying for \_\_\_\_\_, particularly over the next few weeks. Please give me grace to keep to that commitment so that \_\_\_\_\_ (name/s) will be blessed through my prayers and that I will grow and deepen in my prayer life too. In Jesus name, Amen

## GO DEEPER

If you have time, watch the short overview videos on 1 and 2 Thessalonians produced by the Bible Project on the internet (via YouTube or [thebibleproject.com](http://thebibleproject.com)) or study the printed visuals of these overviews in the Appendix, looking out particularly for references to prayer.

## Week 2 – Pray with Thanks

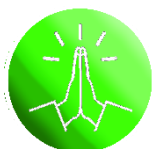
Giving thanks takes up a large proportion of Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians. Andrew Malone, in his lecture on 1 and 2 Thessalonians, suggests that two thirds of Paul’s prayers in these letters are about thanksgiving.

### CONSIDER/DISCUSS

1. When you pray for other people what proportion of your prayers are given over to thanks for them? Is this something you have ever thought much about?
2. Read the following passages from the letters. For each passage, write down what Paul was thankful for. If you are working with a group, you may like to share out the bible verses and feedback to each other.

Bible Reference	What Paul was thankful for
1 Thessalonians 1 v 2 and 3	
1 Thessalonians 2 v 13	
1 Thessalonians 3 v 8 and 9	
2 Thessalonians 1 v 3 and 4	
2 Thessalonians 2 v 13	

3. What difference do you think it would make if you prayed like this regularly for others?



If you are doing this study with other people, divide into pairs and pray a prayer of thanks for one another, taking inspiration from Paul. If you are doing this study by yourself, thank God for your own love, faith etc.

4. How does it feel to be prayed for like this? How does it change the way you think about yourself?

## GO DEEPER

- Consider the person or people that you have committed to pray for during the course of these studies. What can you see in them that you are thankful to God for?
- Write a prayer in the box below, thanking God for your chosen person or people, mentioning the specific things which encourage and bless you.
- Over the next week, pray with thanks each day for your chosen person/people.
- Consider sending a thank you letter, email or message to your chosen person/people. Paul didn't just tell God how thankful he was for the Thessalonians – he also told them!
- Try to pray more prayers of thanks than asking prayers this week and note what difference this makes



## Week 3 – Pray Continually

In 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Paul sets a very high bar for prayer. Twice Paul says he prays “continually” (1 Thess 1 v2 and 5 v 17). Twice he says he prays “always” ( 1 Thess 1 v 1, 2 Thess 2 v 13) and once he says he prays “constantly” (2 Thess 1 v 11)<sup>2</sup>. Paul also instructs the Thessalonians to pray “continually” (1 Thess 5 v 17). You may like to circle or highlight these words in your copy of the letters and/or read these verses aloud.

How do you respond to this? Does it seem a bit extreme? Or impossible for you to achieve? How can we pray like this in the midst of our busy lives? Paul gives us some clues to how he does this:

### A. Paul and his companions prayed “night and day” (1 Thessalonians 3 v 10)

Paul had a day job, making tents and he mentions this in both letters (1 Thess 2 v 9 and 2 Thess 3 v8) , so we know that he was not spending his whole day on his knees. This reference to night and day could be thought of as ‘morning and evening’ – book-ending the day with prayer.

### B. Paul peppered his conversation and activities with prayer

- Paul begins and ends his letters with prayer (1 Thess 1 v2/5 v 23, 2 Thess 1v3/3v16).
- Paul weaves prayer into his teaching points, particularly when he is transitioning from one topic to another. This is shown clearly in the visual summaries in the appendix. For Paul, praying came as naturally as talking. He slipped easily and readily from one to the other.

## CONSIDER/DISCUSS

1. How often do you pray? Do you have set times when you pray, or do you tend to pray ‘on the hoof’? There is no right or wrong answer to this question. We all have different ways of praying. If you are in a group, share your stories.
2. Paul talks about praying “night and day”. What do you think are the advantages of doing both?
3. Paul peppered his activities with prayer. How do you, or could you, imitate Paul? ( e.g. pray in the car as you set off on a journey, or whisper a prayer of “Help!” as you walk into your workplace; pray with thanks when you have arrived safely, or made it through another day at work).
4. Do you weave prayer into your conversations? As you talk about events in the news, or in your family or community life, do you pause and pray? Do you know people who do?
5. Close this study with a prayer, asking the Lord to help you learn how to pray ‘continually’ like Paul.


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<sup>2</sup> New International Version of the Bible



## GO DEEPER

- How can you weave more prayer into your day, following Paul's example? Jot some ideas in the text box below.



A large empty rectangular box for taking notes, with a green circular icon in the top-left corner depicting a person in prayer with rays of light.

- Make a decision to pray for your chosen person/people more often this week, taking some ideas for how to do this from your notes above.
- Try to make a habit of weaving prayer into your daily activities and conversations. If you already do this, try to do it even more.

### Recommended resources for learning to weave prayer through the day:

“Liturgy of the Ordinary”, by Tish Harrison Warren

“The Rhythm of Life: Celtic Daily Prayer” by David Adam

“How to Pray Throughout Your Day” talk by Rick Warren on You Tube<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=rick+warren+how+to+pray+throughout+your+day](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=rick+warren+how+to+pray+throughout+your+day)

## Week 4 – Pray for Maturity in Faith

When we pray for others, we tend to pray for things that are of immediate concern. If they are sick, we pray for healing; on holiday, for safe travels; out of work, for employment and so on. These are good and valid things to pray for. Paul, however, shows us how to go deeper with our intercessions for other Christians. This week's study and the following ones show us how to pray with a broader perspective.

### Read 1 Thessalonians Chapter 2 v 13 – Chapter 3 v10

Thessalonians 2 v 13 says that the Thessalonians accepted the word of God and, as a result of their faith, God's word is now at work in them. However, this is just the beginning of their faith journey and as we see throughout the letters, Paul was eager to strengthen and encourage them in their faith. He was concerned that persecution and spiritual warfare might derail them and prayed earnestly that he might "supply what is lacking in their faith". Paul did not just pray about this. He also did something about it. Firstly, he sent Timothy to them and then he sent his two letters.

### CONSIDER/DISCUSS

1. Where are you in your faith journey? What things might be coming against your own growth to maturity in faith? Is there anything lacking? What could you do about that? Has anyone helped you to grow in maturity in faith? Share your stories.

### Read 2 Thessalonians 1 v 11 and 12 (see box below)

*"I constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfil every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess 1 v11-12)*

### CONSIDER/DISCUSS

2. What is Paul praying for here? Make a list

3. Have you ever prayed like this for yourself or for anyone else consistently? (note, Paul says he prays 'constantly' for this).
4. What would you expect to see happen in yourself and others if you prayed like this regularly?



Pray the words below, from 2 Thessalonians 1 v 11-12 aloud, changing the words 'you' and 'your' to 'me/my' or 'us/our' or use a name. If you are in a group, pray for each other in pairs.

*"I constantly pray for \_\_\_\_\_, that our God may count \_\_\_\_\_ worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfil every good purpose of \_\_\_\_\_ and every act prompted by \_\_\_\_\_ faith. I pray this so that the name of our lord Jesus may be glorified in \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess 1 v11-12)*

## GO DEEPER

- Pray the words of 2 Thessalonians 1 v 11-12 for yourself and your chosen person/people regularly this week. Do you notice anything happening to your own faith as you do this?
- Think about the person/people you have committed to praying for. What might be preventing them growing in faith? Is there anything particular they are lacking? How could you pray about that?
- Consider doing something to help encourage and strengthen the faith of your chosen person/people. eg sending them a bible verse, or sharing a Christian book or video you have enjoyed. If you are not sure what to do, pray for inspiration. The Lord knows exactly what they need and He can use you to bless them. (Note – we are not to try 'fixing' anyone; this is about encouraging and strengthening faith)

## Week 5 – Pray for Increasing Love

Love is a major theme in these letters. The words ‘love’ or ‘loved’ are used 13 times altogether – 9 times in the 1<sup>st</sup> letter and 4 times in the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter. In the 1<sup>st</sup> letter Paul prays that the Lord would make their love increase and overflow” (Chapter 3 v 12). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter Paul gives thanks that their love for one another is increasing (Chapter 1 v 3). Paul is seeing his prayer answered. But how does he know their love is growing? And how does this process happen?

**Read the extracts on p13 and answer the questions below.** You may wish to read the questions first and highlight or underline relevant parts as you read.

1. Complete the second column in the table below

<b>From whom have the Thessalonians received love?</b>	<b>How has that love been demonstrated to the Thessalonians?</b>
God	
Paul, Timothy and Silas	

1. How do the Thessalonians show love in return?
2. What commands does Paul give regarding love? (See particularly 1 Thess 5 v 11 and 12)
3. Have *you* received this kind of love from God and from other Christians? How do you share this kind of love with others? Think of specific examples in both cases. Share your stories.



Finish this study by praying the prayer below for yourself and/or for each other, or pray in your own words

“Thank you God that I am loved by you as a precious child and that I can experience your love by the Holy Spirit and through my Christian brothers and sisters. Thank you for those who have shown love to me. Please direct my heart into your love so that my love will increase more and more. May I share my very life with others, encouraging, comforting and urging them on in living out their faith. May I hold Christian leaders in high regard in love, especially those who work hard on my behalf and may I do my part to live at peace with others, through the grace that you give me. In Jesus’ name”. Amen

### GO DEEPER

- Try to pray the prayer above for yourself and your chosen person/people every day this week, or write your own prayer.
- Look for evidence of increasing love, especially in yourself.
- Consider how the Lord may wish to use you to model a life of love to your chosen person/people and pray for opportunities to do that

## 1 Thessalonians

### **Chapter 1**

**3** We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. **4** For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, **5** because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

**6** You became imitators of us and of the Lord . . .

### **Chapter 2**

**7** . . . Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, **8** so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. **9** Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. **10** You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. **11** For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, **12** encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

### **Chapter 3**

**6** . . . Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you.

### **Chapter 4**

**9** Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. **10** And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more . . .

### **Chapter 5**

**11** Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

**12** Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. **13** Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

## 2 Thessalonians

### **Chapter 3**

<sup>5</sup> May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love . . .



## Week 6 – Pray for Purity

As we have already seen, Paul scatters prayers for the Thessalonian Christians throughout his letters. One of his prayers, and much of Paul’s teaching, focuses on purity:

*“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it”. (1 Thess 5 v 23-24)*

Sanctification, in its simplest terms means to free from sin, or to purify. Sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit: we are cleansed from our sin through repentance and our faith in Jesus’ death on the cross on our behalf. Paul assures us that God is faithful and he will do it. However, we also have a part to play in our sanctification. We have a responsibility to free ourselves from the habits of sin in our lives.

### Read 1 Thessalonians 4 v 1-12 and 5 v 14-22

Paul shows that sanctification is a process. Chapter 4v3 begins “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should . . .” followed by a list of commands. We are forgiven our sins the moment we repent, but to live lives of purity requires certain actions or behaviours on our part.

### CONSIDER/DISCUSS

1. Read Paul’s list of Dos and Don’ts below. What stands out to you? Does anything surprise or challenge you?

Dos	Don’ts
Avoid sexual immorality. Control your own body in a way that is holy and honourable	In sexual relationships, don’t do wrong or take advantage of each other. Don’t give into lust.
Mind your own business	Don’t be a busy body
Work for a living	Don’t make a habit of being financially dependent on others (See also 2 Thess 3 v6-15)
Live a quiet life	Don’t be disruptive
Encourage the disheartened	
Help the weak	
Be patient with everyone	
Strive to do what is good for each other and everyone else	Don’t pay back wrong for wrong
Rejoice always	
Pray continually	
Give thanks in all circumstances	
Test prophecies: hold on to what is good and reject every kind of evil	Don’t quench the Spirit. Don’t treat prophecies with contempt

2. Have you ever prayed for your own purity and/or the purity of another Christian? Is this something that you feel comfortable doing? Why or why not?
  
3. Why do you think Paul speaks and prays so urgently about these things and in fact urges the Thessalonians to live like this “more and more” (4 v 1)?
  
4. Paul says that his own life sets an example for the Thessalonian Christians to follow. (1 Thess 2 v 9-10 and 2 Thess 3 v 7-9). Have you ever considered that your life is a model that other Christians follow and imitate? How might that impact the way you pray for your own purity?



If you are in a group, pray for one another, using the words from Paul’s prayer at the start of the previous page. Encourage one another with the words “The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it!” The Holy Spirit is at work in us to accomplish these things. If you are studying alone, pray for yourself and your chosen person.

## GO DEEPER

- Pray Paul’s prayer for purity for yourself and your chosen person/people this week.
  
- Ask for special grace to grow in purity with regards to any particular ‘Do’ or ‘Don’t’ from Paul’s list (or anything else) that challenges you.
  
- If an issue persists, ask a trusted friend to pray with you.

### Historical and Cultural Context

Idleness was a particular problem for the Thessalonians. Paul addresses this issue in both his letters. One reason for their idleness seems to be their expectation that Jesus was coming back imminently (see Week 8’s study). The Bible Project suggests another possible reason for their lack of willingness to work with their hands could be a cultural practice of the day where wealthy citizens would pay people to run errands for them. Perhaps some of Paul’s new converts were in the habit of making a living this way, which could lead to the behaviour of a ‘busy body’ or meddler—looking to see what is going on, or stirring things up in order to profit from events in some way. Craig S Keener, in ‘The Bible Background Commentary’ suggests that among the Greeks and Romans at the time there was a disdain for manual labour and some pursued what was called a ‘Cynic’ lifestyle of travelling philosophers. Unlike Paul, Cynics begged rather than worked and with their denunciations of passers by were certainly ‘meddlers’. Whatever the reason for their idleness, Paul urges his listeners to live worthwhile and productive lives instead.

## Week 7 – Pray for Strength to Persevere

Paul prays for the Thessalonians to have the strength to persevere in their faith in the face of opposition:

*“May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones” (1 Thess 3 v 13)*

*“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father . . . encourage your hearts and strengthen you . . .” (2 Thess 2 v 16-17)*

*“May the Lord direct your hearts into . . . Christ’s perseverance” (2 Thess 3 v 5)*

## Read 1 Thess 2 v 1 – 20 and 3 v 1-8 – Suffering and Persecution

Paul says that opposition comes from two sources: people who oppose their message and Satan, who is also described as “the tempter”.

### CONSIDER/DISCUSS

1. List the ways people and Satan oppose Paul and the Christians in Thessalonica.
2. What does Paul teach about suffering and persecution?
3. We too live in a society which is a melting pot of religions and philosophies; some people strongly oppose our beliefs and Satan still seeks to deceive and discourage. Have you or the people you are praying for experienced opposition from others or temptation to give up on your/their faith?

## Keep On Keeping On

Timothy reported that despite opposition, the Thessalonians had held onto their faith. Paul thanks God for their “endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 1 v 3) and in the second letter Paul goes as far as to say “. . . among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring”. And yet Paul knows that opposition is relentless and that the temptation to give up will always be there. And so he instructs them:

- Encourage one another and build one another up (1 Thess 5 v11)
- Don’t let anyone deceive you in anyway (2 Thess 2 v 3)
- Stand firm and hold fast to the teaching we passed on to you” (2 Thess 2 v15)

Paul also encourages them that “The Lord is faithful and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one”. (2 Thess 3 v3).

## CONSIDER/DISCUSS

4. What helps you to keep persevering?



Write a prayer for strength to persevere for yourself and your chosen person/people. If you are studying in a group, break into pairs and use your prayer to pray for each other

## GO DEEPER

- Keep praying this week for your chosen person/people to have strength to persevere in their faith.
- Consider if there is anything you can do to encourage and build that person up in the faith.
- Look for ways to build yourself up in the faith – eg through reading Scripture, reading Christian books, listening to Christian teaching and praying with others.

## Week 8 – Pray in the Light of the Second Coming

It is impossible to read the letters to the Thessalonians without noticing the frequent references to the second coming of Jesus, or what Paul sometimes refers to as ‘the day of the Lord’ (1 Thess 5 v 2). **Twice Paul prays that the Thessalonians would be**

*‘blameless . . . when our Lord Jesus comes.’* (1 Thess 3 v13 and 1 Thess 5 v 23).

### CONSIDER/DISCUSS

1. How much does the second coming feature in your prayer life? Why do you think that is?

### Read 1 Thessalonians Chapter 4 v 13- Chapter 5 v 10

The second coming was of huge concern to the Thessalonians and there was much confusion about it.

### CONSIDER/DISCUSS

2. According to Paul, why is the second coming a reason for great hope and encouragement for Christians?
3. The times and dates of the second coming seemed to be of concern to the Thessalonians. What does Paul say about this? (Note, Paul’s teaching mirrors the teaching of Jesus, recorded in Matthew chapter 24)
4. How should our expectation of the second coming affect our behaviour?

The word ‘sleep’ is used in two different ways in this passage. In chapter 4 v 13 and chapter 5 v 10 sleep/asleep refers to death. In chapter 5 v 6-9 sleep refers to spiritual sleepiness or slumber. Drunkenness is probably a metaphor for the same kind of slumber or ‘not having your wits about you’. Darkness/night and the day/light are used similarly as metaphors.

## Don't be Deceived about the Second Coming

In 2 Thessalonians Paul addresses the fact that the Thessalonians had heard some false teaching, which had allegedly come from Paul, that Jesus had already returned. Paul tells them not to become 'easily unsettled or alarmed' by this teaching and not to let anyone deceive them in any way. (Chapter 2 v2-3). He reminds them of his previous teaching (2 v 5) and assures them that the 'day of the Lord' will not happen until 'the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed'. There are many different interpretations of what and who this is. Presumably it was understood by the Thessalonians as Paul had taught them about it before, but it is not clear to us today. In any case Paul's main point was: this event had not yet happened and the day of the Lord was still in the future.

Jesus warned that many people would try to predict the day of his return but he commanded his followers not to believe any predictions because "the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" (Matthew 24 v 44). Throughout the ages and still today many people try to 'read the signs of the times' to predict the second coming. The internet is awash with it. It's clear from Jesus' and Paul's teachings that we are not to do this.

## CONSIDER/DISCUSS

5. Why do you think there is such pre-occupation with 'end times' theories and predictions? Do you get unsettled or alarmed by such teaching? Do you know others who do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Why do you think Jesus warned not to get involved in it?



7. How can we pray about the second coming with the right perspective? How does Paul model it for us in these letters?



Write a prayer for yourself and your chosen person/people in the light of the second coming.

### GO DEEPER

- Use your prayer about the second coming for yourself and your chosen person/people daily this week if you can.
- Notice what difference it makes to the way you think about and anticipate Jesus' return.

## Week 9 – Pray for the Gospel Message

At the end of both letters, Paul asks the Thessalonians to pray for him and his companions. He asks them to

pray *‘that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people’*

*‘pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you’.* (2 Thessalonians 3 v 1-2)

Paul expects the Thessalonians to be witnesses of the gospel message too. In fact, Paul praises the Thessalonians for the huge impact their witness has already had:

*The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia – your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”* (1 Thessalonians 1 v 7-9)

Paul also shows that the way we live our daily life is also an important part of our witness. Paul tells the Thessalonians that their daily life should

*‘win the respect of outsiders’ (non-Christians) – (1 Thessalonian 4 v 12)*

### CONSIDER/DISCUSS

1. Do you pray that the gospel message would spread rapidly and be honoured? How much does the spread of the gospel feature in your prayer life?
2. Are you known for your Christian faith among your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours? How about the person/people you are praying for? Are you and/or they actively ‘ringing out the gospel message’? How important do you think this is? How do you/they do this?
3. How does the way you live your life on a day to day basis win the respect of non-Christians? Share your stories and encourage one another. If you are aware of any hypocrisy in yourself (not practising what you preach) take it to the Lord in prayer, or ask someone else to pray for you.



Write a prayer that the gospel would spread rapidly and be honoured through your witness and the witness of your chosen person/people. If you are in a group, break into prayers and pray for each other.

## GO DEEPER

- Pray every day this week for yourself and your chosen person/people that you would be known for your faith and that your daily life would win the respect of non-Christians. Pray for the gospel to spread rapidly and be honoured.
- Note how this prayer affects the way you live this week. Are you more aware of opportunities to share your faith? Are you more aware that how you live witnesses Christ's life in you to others?
- Has the person you are praying for, or someone else, been a significant influence on your own faith through their witness or example? Consider encouraging them, by letting them know the impact their witness has had on you.
- If you are studying this course during the season of Lent, continue to pray for the gospel message to 'ring out' and be honoured throughout Holy Week. Rejoice in the fact that you have been called to share the life-changing message of Easter.

### Historical Context: Aristarchus of Thessalonica

Aristarchus, one of the Thessalonian Christians, became a partner with Paul in preaching the gospel. (Philemon 1 v24). Aristarchus travelled with Paul through Macedonia and suffered persecution in Ephesus (Acts 19 v 27, 20 v 4). He sailed with Paul to Rome (Acts 27 v 2), where they both became prisoners (Colossians 4 v 10).

Tradition holds that Aristarchus later became bishop of Apamea in Syria and that he died a martyr's death under the Emperor Nero.



## Appendix

- Visual Summaries of 1 and 2 Thessalonians produced by The Bible Project
- Printed copies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians

THE CHURCH OF ACTS  
SILAS & PAUL



THEIR DEPTHS  
CAUSE SINNING  
JESUS IS KING!  
(1:7)

# 1 THESSALONIANS

Holiness  
Love  
Future Hope

FOLLOWING JESUS PRODUCES A COUNTER-CULTURAL **July** WAY OF LIFE...

... THAT RESPONDS TO HOSTILITY WITH **LOVE** & GENEROSITY.

... THAT IS MOTIVATED BY **HOPE** IN THE COMING KINGDOM OF JESUS.

## 1-3 A CELEBRATION OF FAITHFULNESS

10-10 THE  
THESSALONIANS  
CONVERSION



YOU TURNED AWAY FROM **IDOLS**  
TO SERVE THE **LIVING & TRUE GOD**,  
AND ARE WAITING FOR THE COMING  
OF GOD'S SON FROM HEAVEN. (1:9-10)

11-5 THANKSGIVING  
PRAYER  
I THANK GOD  
FOR YOUR FAITH,  
FOR YOUR LOVE,  
AND  
HOPE!

2:15-18 THEIR COMMON PERSECUTION



THEIR SUFFERING IS A MARK OF PARTICIPATING IN THE STORY OF JESUS

2:17-3:10 THE THESSALONIANS  
ARE SUFFERING!

SEND  
THOUGHTS  
ON MY  
... & THOUGHTS  
DISCOVERY

WE'RE COMING  
STRONG!  
AND WE  
MISS PAUL!

2:1-12 PAUL'S  
MISSION IN  
THESSALONICA



WE WERE HAPPY TO SHARE NOT ONLY THE GOOD  
NEWS FROM GOD, BUT **OUR VERY SENSES**,  
BECAUSE WE CAME TO DEARLY LOVE YOU. (2:3)

3:1-12 PRAYER  
FOR ENDURANCE



MAY GOD INCREASE  
YOUR LOVE,  
HOLES,  
& HOPE!

## 4-5 A CHALLENGE TO GROW

1:1-8 HOLINESS & SEXUAL PURITY  
FOLLOWING  
JESUS  
TEACHES  
SEX &  
MARRIAGE  
(PARTIAL)  
(1:3-5, 2:1-5, 4:3-8)



4:9-12 COMMITMENT TO  
LOVE & SERVICE  
WORKING HARD SO THAT YOU  
CAN BE GENEROUS TO OTHERS  
(see 2 THESSALONIANS 3:10-12)



1:10-12 HONOR HOPE OF JESUS RETURN



WHAT'S  
THEIR FINE  
MORALS  
REMAINS?  
4:1-6  
THOSE WHO  
HAVE DIED IN  
THE MESSIAH  
WILL RISE.  
4:16

CAESAR'S ARRIVAL  
MET BY HIS DELEGATES

JESUS ARRIVAL  
MET BY HIS PEOPLE (4:13)

PEACE &  
SECURITY!

5:1-11 HIS HOPE SHOULD MOTIVATE BENEVOLENCE

... SO LIVE IN  
THE PRESENT  
AS IF THAT DAY IS  
ALREADY HERE.  
(5:11)

THE DAY OF  
THE LORD WILL  
COME LIKE  
A THIEF IN THE  
NIGHT.  
(5:2-3)

5:23-26 PRAYER  
OF HOPE  
MAY GOD  
KEEP YOU  
SAFE AS  
YOU AWAIT THE  
ARRIVAL OF  
JESUS.

# 2 THESSALONIANS

BELIEF IN JESUS' RETURN & HOPE FOR FINAL JUSTICE

INSPIRED HOPE & FAITHFULNESS FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR SHARES WHAT YOU LIVE FOR.

THINGS IN THESSALONIA HAD GOTTEN WORSE!

PERSECUTION

CONVERSION ABOUT JESUS RETURN

## 1 HOPE DESPITE PERSECUTION

**11-13** THANKSGIVING PRAYER

I THANK GOD FOR YOUR FAITHFUL LOVE, ENDURANCE.

PERSECUTION HAS INTENSIFIED

**14-17** SUFFERING - FALSIFICATION IN GOD'S KINGDOM

JESUS FOLLOWERS SHOW THEIR VICTORY THROUGH NON-VIOLENCE & ENDURANCE

THE ULTIMATE TRAGEDY

THEY WILL NOT BE SHARDED FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD & FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER.

JESUS RETURN = FINAL JUSTICE

**11-12** HAY THE LORD JESUS BE HONORED THROUGH YOU.

## 2 THE DAY OF THE LORD

PAUL SAYS: THE DAY OF THE LORD IS AT HAND UPON US!!

GODS FINAL JUSTICE ON EVIL

DID JESUS COME LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT? (SEE THESSALONIANS 5:2)

JESUS HAS ABANDONED US!!!!

I WISH I SAID THAT!

REMEMBER WHAT I TAUGHT YOU...

THE LORD WILL KEEP PRODUKING RULERS AND REBELS & EXALT THESSALONIA'S ABOVE GOD.

A PRATER PAUL EXPECTS YOU TO BE READY

THE REBEL

WILL BREAK VIOLENCE & HAVOC ON GODS ARMY...

BUT NOT FOREVER... JESUS WILL CONQUER THE REBEL... & DELIVER HIS PEOPLE.

THE - IS NOT TO FUEL APocalyptic SPECULATION - IS TO COMFORT THE THESSALONIANS & RECALL JESUS TEACHINGS (SEE MARK 13)

THE EVENTS LEADING TO JESUS RETURN WILL BE OBVIOUS! YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SCARED.

PHILIP!

HAY THE LORD GIVE YOU COMFORT & STRENGTH

## 3 CHALLENGE TO THE "IDLE"

POSSIBLE: JESUS COME AND REDEMPT US! (WHILE YOU WORK!)

NOT LAZY, BUT IRRESPONSIBLE & REFUSING TO WORK (SEE 1 THESSALONIANS 5:9-12, 5:14)

MORE LIKELY: ROMAN PATRONAGE

FEEL ME SIX POSITIVES.

SOME OF YOU ARE LEADING A DISORDERED LIFE, NOT WORKING, BUT MESSING IN THE BUSINESS OF OTHERS.

PAUL'S EXAMPLE

THINKING JESUS SELF-DENYING LOVE

ROUNDING UP WAGES TO SEND OTHERS FREE OF CHARGE

THE DEAL

WORKING HARD SO THEIR LIVES CAN BENEFIT OTHERS

HAY THE LORD OF PEACE GRANT YOU PEACE

created by the Bible Project



# 1 Thessalonians (New International Version)

## *Salutation*

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

## *The Thessalonians' Faith and Example*

**2** We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. **3** We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. **4** For we know, brothers and sisters<sup>[2]</sup> loved by God, that he has chosen you, **5** because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

**6** You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. **7** And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. **8** The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia-your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, **9** for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, **10** and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

## *Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica*

**2** **1** You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. **2** We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. **3** For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. **4** On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. **5** You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed-God is our witness. **6** We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority.

**7** Instead, we were like young children<sup>[1]</sup> among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, **8** so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. **9** Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. **10** You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. **11** For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, **12** encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

**13** And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. **14** For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews **15** who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone **16** in their effort to keep us from

speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.[2]

### ***Paul's Absence and Concern***

**17** But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. **18** For we wanted to come to you-certainly I, Paul, did, again and again-but Satan blocked our way. **19** For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? **20** Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

**3 1** So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. **2** We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, **3** so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them. **4** In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. **5** For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.

**6** But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. **7** Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. **8** For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. **9** How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? **10** Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

**11** Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. **12** May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. **13** May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

### ***A Life Pleasing to God***

**4 1** As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. **2** For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. **3** It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; **4** that each of you should learn to control your own body[1] in a way that is holy and honorable, **5** not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; **6** and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister.[2] The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. **7** For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. **8** Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

**9** Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. **10** And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, **11** and to make it your

ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, **12** so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

### ***The Coming of the Lord***

**13** Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. **14** For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. **15** According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

**5 1** Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, **2** for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. **3** While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. **4** But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. **5** You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

**6** So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. **7** For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. **8** But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. **9** For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. **10** He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

**11** Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

### ***Paul Exhorts the Brethren***

**12** Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. **13** Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. **14** And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15** Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

**16** Rejoice always, **17** pray continually, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. **19** Do not quench the Spirit. **20** Do not treat prophecies with contempt **21** but test them all; hold on to what is good, **22** reject every kind of evil.

**23** May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

### ***Final Greetings and Benediction***

**25** Brothers and sisters, pray for us. **26** Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. **27** I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters. **28** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

## 2 Thessalonians (New International Version)

**1** Paul, Silas<sup>[a]</sup> and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### ***Thanksgiving and Prayer***

<sup>3</sup> We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters,<sup>[b]</sup> and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. <sup>4</sup> Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

<sup>5</sup> All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. <sup>6</sup> God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you <sup>7</sup> and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. <sup>8</sup> He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup> They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might <sup>10</sup> on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

<sup>11</sup> With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. <sup>12</sup> We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>[c]</sup>

### ***The Man of Lawlessness***

**2** Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, <sup>2</sup> not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. <sup>3</sup> Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness<sup>[a]</sup> is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. <sup>4</sup> He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

<sup>5</sup> Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? <sup>6</sup> And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> For the secret

power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. <sup>8</sup> And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. <sup>9</sup> The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, <sup>10</sup> and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. <sup>11</sup> For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie <sup>12</sup> and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

### ***Stand Firm***

<sup>13</sup> But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits<sup>[a]</sup> to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. <sup>14</sup> He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>15</sup> So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings<sup>[c]</sup> we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

<sup>16</sup> May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, <sup>17</sup> encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

### ***Request for Prayer***

**3** As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you. <sup>2</sup> And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith. <sup>3</sup> But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. <sup>4</sup> We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. <sup>5</sup> May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

### ***Warning Against Idleness***

<sup>6</sup> In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching<sup>[a]</sup> you received from us. <sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, <sup>8</sup> nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. <sup>9</sup> We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. <sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."

<sup>11</sup> We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. <sup>12</sup> Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. <sup>13</sup> And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.

<sup>14</sup>Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. <sup>15</sup>Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer.

***Final Greetings***

<sup>16</sup>Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

<sup>17</sup>I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.

<sup>18</sup>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.