

THE BOOK OF

1 Thessalonians

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES FOR SMALL GROUPS

RELATIONAL BIBLE STUDY SERIES

CREATED BY STEVE CASE

Good People

OPENING QUESTION

Who are the people who pray for you?

READ 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10.

1. What do we know about the church in Thessalonica?

- A. Not much.
- B. Paul wrote two letters to this church.
- C. *Acts 17* describes how the church got started.
- D. Paul incited a riot there.
- E. Paul spent more than a year firmly planting this church.
- F. The Jews there accepted Jesus as their Messiah.
- G. Paul worried the believers would quit (*1 Thessalonians 3:1-8*).
- H. They suffered persecution.
- I. Other.

2. What came to Paul's mind when thinking about this church (*vs. 2-3*)?

- A. Gratitude.
- B. Faithfulness.
- C. Encouragement.
- D. Persecution.
- E. Spiritually dead.
- F. Loving actions.
- G. Living in anticipation of Christ's return.
- H. Community service.
- I. Other.

3. How did Paul know God loved the believers in Thessalonica?

- A. God loves all believers.
- B. God loves all people—believers as well as unbelievers.
- C. God sent them the good news about Jesus.
- D. The Thessalonians were God's favorite people.
- E. The way the believers stood strong in faith.
- F. God demonstrated his love there with power.
- G. Persecution didn't overwhelm them.
- H. God told Paul to let the Thessalonian believers know he loved them.
- I. Other.

4. In what ways are you an example to others about Jesus?

- A. I can't think of anything.
- B. Acts of love.
- C. Patience.
- D. God sometimes demonstrates his supernatural power through me.
- E. I'm always talking about Jesus.
- F. People know me as someone who turns the other cheek.
- G. I'm very, very busy.
- H. Persecution and tough times don't get me down.
- I. Other.

5. Why did the Thessalonians accept the message about Jesus?

- A. It made their lives a whole lot easier.
- B. It made their lives a whole lot better.
- C. Paul preached convincing sermons.
- D. Everybody was doing it.
- E. It created so much joy in their lives.
- F. They witnessed God's power.
- G. Persecution wasn't a problem for them.
- H. Other.

6. What idols have you turned away from to serve the living God (vs. 9)?

- A. Me, myself, and I.
- B. Family is #1 to me rather than making God #1.
- C. My god is too tame to be a living God.
- D. Stuff—always wanting more, More, MORE!
- E. I used to have a shrine in my house.
- F. I simply can't be without my phone.
- G. Going through religious motions but lacking God's power.
- H. Other.

7. Which impacts you more—the good news about Jesus OR the power you receive from Jesus?

8. What are you looking forward to when Christ returns to earth?

Tough Times

OPENING QUESTION

When have you done something that seemed to fail, but then succeeded?

READ 1 Thessalonians 2:1–20.

1. Why did Paul insist his visit wasn't a failure—without results (vs. 1)?

- A. There were results!
- B. Paul was a fighter.
- C. Paul had a big ego so failure wasn't an option.
- D. Paul's work got cut short (*Acts 17:3, 10*).
- E. What happened compelled Paul to follow up with this letter.
- F. Nothing is a failure if it's for God.
- G. The results weren't as great as Paul had hoped.
- H. The fact that Thessalonica had a Christian church indicated success.
- I. Other.

2. Paul received bad treatment. When do you receive bad treatment?

- A. Whenever I share the Gospel with others.
- B. When I do something wrong.
- C. When I do something right.
- D. I treat people well, so they treat me well.
- E. I don't get the respect I deserve from my family.
- F. Nobody ever started a riot because of me.
- G. Whenever I talk about politics with others.
- H. This happens with certain people at my church.
- I. Other.

3. What is the best way to win people for Christ?

- A. Don't treat them like a trophy or something to be won.
- B. Just tell them about Jesus.
- C. Tailor the message about Jesus to the specific person.
- D. Share your own testimony.
- E. Hold an evangelistic series of meetings at your church.
- F. Meet the needs of those who have needs.
- G. Actions count more than words.
- H. Words count more than actions.
- I. Other.

4. What did Paul do right when he started the church in Thessalonica?

- A. He told them all about Jesus.
- B. He started with the Jews.
- C. He started with the Gentiles.
- D. Paul earned money for his expenses instead of collecting offerings.
- E. Paul was as gentle as a nursing mother.
- F. He set up elders and deacons to keep the church going.
- G. Paul sacrificed his own safety for the new believers.
- H. Other.

5. What do you consider to be the authoritative Word of God?

- A. The Bible.
- B. A smart person's interpretation of the Bible.
- C. Things I was taught growing up.
- D. Things I've discovered since I grew up.
- E. Whatever the preacher says.
- F. What a group of believers says is true—"where 2 or 3 are gathered."
- G. Messages I receive directly from the Holy Spirit.
- H. Other.

6. What made the good news of Jesus so inflammatory?

- A. It's not good news to everyone.
- B. Jesus calls for change, and change is hard.
- C. Paul, the speaker, was inflammatory.
- D. The Jews looked bad for rejecting and killing Jesus—the Messiah.
- E. Jesus is radical, so you can expect a reaction.
- F. Exclusive worship of Jesus (no other gods).
- G. Inclusive acceptance of all people—it upsets the social order.
- H. Other.

7. When have you lived to please God but found it didn't please people?

8. Who do you expect will be your "pride and joy" (vs. 20 NLT) when Jesus returns?

Sharing Some Good News

OPENING QUESTION

How do you usually connect with others—phone call, text, in-person, or something else?

READ 1 Thessalonians 3:1–13.

1. Who'd you send to check on someone you care about, but can't see?

- A. One of my friends.
- B. One of our mutual friends.
- C. A relative.
- D. A pastor.
- E. Someone who lives near them (*Proverbs 27:10*).
- F. I'm fine with social media.
- G. Prayer is the only thing that matters.
- H. I'd have to go myself.
- I. Other.

2. What was the purpose of Timothy's visit?

- A. Check on the believers in Thessalonica.
- B. Collect an offering.
- C. Provide encouragement and increase the believers' faith.
- D. Plant a second church in the city.
- E. Promote community outreach.
- F. Make sure people were still going to church.
- G. Call for repentance.
- H. Paul wanted a personal update, and there were no phones.
- I. Other.

3. What troubles have come to you because of your faith in Jesus?

- A. I can't think of any.
- B. So many that I can't number them.
- C. Rejection by friends and/or relatives.
- D. Financial struggles.
- E. Questions about my faith.
- F. Threats to my personal security.
- G. Confusion or uncertainty about my place or purpose in this world.
- H. Loneliness.
- I. Other.

4. How does the faith that others have in Jesus strengthen your own faith?

- A. It doesn't affect me one way or the other.
- B. It affirms my own faith in Jesus.
- C. It makes Jesus more personal and real to me.
- D. It seems so different from my own faith.
- E. I don't feel like I'm on my own.
- F. It gives me more courage to take a stand and live what is right.
- G. I'm amazed by the faith in Jesus that others have.
- H. Other.

5. If someone asked, "How's your faith?" what would be your response?

- A. Fine.
- B. None of your business.
- C. Pray for me.
- D. Full of joy.
- E. Surviving.
- F. Thriving.
- G. Blah.
- H. Other.

6. What might be missing in your faith?

- A. Nothing, why do you ask?
- B. Confidence.
- C. Testing.
- D. Joy.
- E. Depth.
- F. Knowledge.
- G. Practice.
- H. Other.

7. Who is someone you regularly pray for, and what is your prayer?

8. What would Paul's prayer (vs. 12-13) look like flowing through you?

Living Here and There

OPENING QUESTION

What is something you've done (or not done) that pleased your parent(s)?

READ 1 Thessalonians 4:1–18.

1. What are you doing now that pleases God?

- A. I forgive freely.
- B. I hold people accountable.
- C. I repent regularly.
- D. I have a vibrant devotional life.
- E. I am very involved at church.
- F. I demonstrate patience.
- G. I have a focused ministry to a marginalized group.
- H. I share Jesus with others.
- I. Other.

2. What do you think should be included in holiness/sanctification (vs. 3)?

- A. Consistently do good.
- B. Consistently avoid or resist evil.
- C. Be super mellow.
- D. Fast and pray.
- E. Active political engagement.
- F. Sexual purity.
- G. Don't create any problems.
- H. Be a positive influence on others.
- I. Other.

3. What would you include in sexual purity?

- A. No sex.
- B. No thoughts about sex.
- C. Sex only for procreation.
- D. Sex only with a committed partner.
- E. No lust.
- F. No sex drive.
- G. Take a purity pledge.
- H. Treat sex as part of the whole of life.
- I. Other.

4. How do you live out *verses 11-12*?

- A. Be ambitious.
- B. Live a quiet life.
- C. Be involved in one's church.
- D. Be involved in one's community.
- E. Earn the respect of those inside the church.
- F. Earn the respect of those outside the church.
- G. Be financially independent.
- H. Other.

5. Why do people lack hope when someone dies?

- A. The one who died was not a believer.
- B. The one who is still alive is not a believer.
- C. The personal loss overwhelms some people.
- D. Uncertainty about where the person went.
- E. Heaven seems too good to be true.
- F. Christ's promised return still hasn't happened.
- G. Lack of faith.
- H. Other.

6. Based on *verses 13-18*, **what will happen when Jesus returns to earth?**

- A. No more death.
- B. A resurrection of the righteous.
- C. Jesus will bring from heaven those who died in Christ.
- D. Jesus will bring from earth those who died in Christ.
- E. It will be a secret rapture.
- F. Those who "die in Christ" go to heaven first.
- G. Jesus will take all of his people to heaven with him.
- H. Other.

7. Where do you demonstrate love to fellow believers, but you could still show even more love (*vs. 10*)?

8. Who are you looking forward to seeing at the resurrection when Christ returns?

Surprised?

OPENING QUESTION

When have you been surprised—in either a good way or a bad way?

READ 1 Thessalonians 5:1–28.

1. When will the “Day of the Lord” come (vs. 2)?

- A. Any day now.
- B. It will surprise everyone.
- C. It won’t surprise God’s children.
- D. It has already come.
- E. No one knows the day or the hour; only the Father.
- F. It will come like a thief in the night.
- G. At some point in my lifetime.
- H. It could be a thousand years from now.
- I. Other.

2. Why won’t God’s children be taken by surprise when Christ returns?

- A. They will be taken by surprise.
- B. They are always ready.
- C. They will be told sometime in advance exactly when Christ will come.
- D. God’s children don’t like surprises.
- E. God’s children maintain their focus on God.
- F. They are children of the light, not the darkness.
- G. God’s children never sleep.
- H. They know the prophecies about time both forward and backward.
- I. Other.

3. What characterizes those who live in the light (vs. 8)?

- A. Clear vision.
- B. Full of faith.
- C. Bursting with love.
- D. Assured of salvation.
- E. Always on guard.
- F. Alcohol-free.
- G. They use lots of energy to keep their light shining.
- H. An unshakeable peace.
- I. Other.

4. What tidbits did Paul include toward the end of this book?

- A. Rejoice all the time.
- B. Pray without ceasing.
- C. Correct those in error.
- D. Testify about your faith.
- E. Eye for eye; tooth for tooth.
- F. Make every day Thanksgiving.
- G. Honor church leaders.
- H. Other.

5. How can people “pray without ceasing” (vs. 17)?

- A. It’s impossible to do this literally (you have to eat/sleep sometime).
- B. Fast more often so you can pray more often.
- C. It just means to pray a lot.
- D. Have set times to pray AND pray spontaneously.
- E. Maintain a conversation with Jesus throughout the day.
- F. It’s like people who text all the time—without ceasing.
- G. Observe what’s around you and then turn it over to God.
- H. Other.

6. How can a person live out *verse 22* in practical ways?

- A. Avoid the appearance of evil.
- B. Avoid evil.
- C. Always have an alibi.
- D. Stay in your home country and away from evil countries.
- E. Don’t listen to criticism.
- F. Do good like Jesus and nothing bad will happen to you.
- G. Stay out of politics, including church politics.
- H. Other.

7. What are some of the ways you can, or already “encourage and build each other up” (vs. 11)?

8. What is one of your key takeaways from *1 Thessalonians*?

