

2 Thessalonians

Week One

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2 Thessalonians 1

STUDY GUIDE

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Day 1

In order for the study of God's Word to take root in our hearts it must be combined with prayer and meditation and the work of the Holy Spirit. Prayer in response to thinking and pondering on God's Word helps us to ground our thoughts in God's will and ways, not our own fallen thinking. As you read through this week's portion of Scripture several times, prayerfully contemplate:

- What in these verses can you praise God for?
- What do these verses reveal you need to confess?
- What in these verses can you thank God for?
- What do these verses show that you need from God?

Day 2- 2 Thessalonians 1:1-3

1. Paul wrote his second letter to the Thessalonians shortly after he wrote the first letter. What had he prayed for the Thessalonian believers in 1 Thessalonians 3:9-12?

2. How had God answered his prayers according to 2 Thessalonians 1:3?

3. What relationship does flourishing faith have with increasing love for fellow believers? Look up the following passages and explain the connection between faith and love for believers.

James 2:14-17-

1 John 4:7-8-

John 13:35-

1 Peter 1:22-23-

Galatians 5:6



One way to gauge how you are growing in faith is to take a look at how you are loving fellow believers. Is your love increasing?

- ❖ Do you patiently bear with the failings, shortcomings and aggravations of your brothers and sisters in Christ? (Eph. 4:1-3, Rom 15:1)
- ❖ Do you gladly help when a need arises in the church? (Gal. 5:13)
- ❖ Do you believe the best of your fellow believers? (1 Cor. 13:7)
- ❖ Do you eagerly forgive one another? (Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:13)
- ❖ Do you pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ? (James 5:16)

Make it a consistent prayer to ask God to make your heart increase and abound in love for one another and for all.

Day 3- 2 Thessalonians 1:4

4. What was the continuing situation the Thessalonians were facing according to verse 4?

Scholar's Note: "Persecutions" (diogmois) are sufferings incurred because of faith in Christ, while "trials" (thlipsesin) are troubles of any kind. -Expositor's Bible Commentary

5. In light of their hardship, what was Paul so happy to see in them?

6. Use a dictionary to define:

- Steadfastness-
- Faith-

Why are these traits vital to thriving, not just surviving in persecution and trials?

Digging Deeper: Look up Matthew 13:20-21 and 1 Peter 1:6-7. What did the persecution and hardships the Thessalonians were enduring prove about their faith?

7. The Thessalonian believers were being persecuted for following Jesus (1:5-

10), they were frightened about their future because of their confusion about the return of Jesus (2:1-3) and some in their fellowship were a burden because they refused to work (3:6-11). What do you think Paul's encouragement in verse 3 would do for the Thessalonian believers under this kind of pressure?

-How has the encouragement of a fellow believer helped you to grow or to persevere in your faith?

-How can you encourage someone this week in his or her faith?

Day 4- 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

8. Read verse 5 in the NLT. What will God use the persecution the Thessalonians are experiencing for?

Picture and Ponder: "We will have difficulty understanding, from our limited earthly perspective, why God uses hardships, suffering and pain to accomplish His great purposes. While we may concede their immediate value in producing humility before Him and fostering dependence on Him, most of us never stop to consider that God uses our pain to produce something much bigger than what we presently see...Paul is reassuring [the Thessalonians] that their suffering has an eternal purpose." -Mark Howell, Exalting Jesus in 1 and 2 Thessalonians

"God has designed suffering to work for us and not against us. He has designed it to change us, to consume our dross and refine our gold. He will supply his all-sufficient grace through the fiery trials of life, and *those trials are actually evidence that God is for us and not against us*" - James Grant

Digging Deeper: Read James 1:2 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. What is the outcome when we see trials from a godly perspective?

Present/earthly outcome-

Future/eternal outcome-

9. According to verse 7 and 10, what will happen to believers when Jesus is revealed?

10. In your own words describe what the word "relief" would mean to people suffering persecution and trials.

11. What is in store for unbelievers according to verses 6-9?

12. Write the definition of hell that Paul gives in verse 9.

Day 5- 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

In light of the promise of future glory, Paul prays for the Thessalonians living in their present difficulties.

13. We know it is true that we do not earn God's approval by being

worthy of it. In light of this truth, think of the worthiness of the *calling*, not the worthiness of the *called* and then explain in your own words what “worthy of his calling” means.

Picture and Ponder: A man owning a very valuable 19th century impressionist oil painting by Paul Cezanne must decide which grandchild will inherit the painting when he dies. One grandchild is in the medical field, a student of science, with an analytical mind. The other is a curator in a museum who majored in art history and is an aspiring artist. Which one is worthy of the painting? Neither one is deserving of the painting, but one is more suited for the inheritance. One understands the beauty, the worth, the value of the gift. One will take care of it and display it properly.

This is the idea of being worthy of God’s calling. It is living a life that is in keeping with such a valuable gift. Jesus is so glorious, beautiful and majestic that to live a life worthy of him is to recognize, value, and treasure who he is and live a life that displays his worth by following and obeying him.



Reflect on your life and priorities...

- ❖ Is the way you live your life showing how worthy the gospel is?
- ❖ In what ways does your life diminish the worth of the gospel?

Spend some time in prayer talking to God about these things.

14. According to Paul’s prayer in verse 11, what is the relationship between what we do and what God does?

15. What is the result of God’s power working in us through faith? (v.12)



Paul's letters are sprinkled throughout with prayers for the believers he loved. Paul's prayers, like his life, were focused on things of a spiritual nature. Like a laser beam he hones in on the things that are of eternal value. There are many things he could have prayed for the Thessalonians who were enduring persecution and trials, and he most likely did lift up their physical needs to God, (we are to bring all our needs to our heavenly Father) but his priority was that their lives glorify their worthy Savior through whatever circumstances they were facing. These prayers are a model and challenge for us as we reflect on our prayer life.

- ❖ What do your prayers show about your priorities?
- ❖ Are your prayers Christ exalting, or do they look like prayers someone from any religion would pray?
- ❖ Are your prayers faith-filled, trusting in the promises of God, or are they more like worrying out loud?
- ❖ Are your prayers centered on the gifts of God rather than the Giver himself?
- ❖ Do your prayers focus on the circumstances or how Jesus can be honored and glorified in the circumstances?
- ❖ Are your prayers about building God's kingdom and fulfilling his mission?

One Thing: Look back over this week's study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here.

How will knowing this impact the way you think and act?