

# I & II THESSALONIANS

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PREPARING FOR THE SECOND COMING

MIKE MAZZALONGO

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

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# **I & II Thessalonians**

## ***Preparing for the Second Coming***

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**Mike Mazzalongo**

No other book of the Bible gives a clearer sequence and detail of the events surrounding the glorious return of Jesus Christ than the two letters Paul writes to a young church at Thessalonica (Greece) who fear that their departed loved ones will be left behind when that great day comes.



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## Overall Teaching Strategy

It is recommended that teachers use a combination of informal lecture and guided discussion to present these lessons. There are discussion questions associated with each lesson that teachers may use and/or supplement with their own questions.

It is recommended that teachers have students view the associated video or read the text for the lesson. This helps students come to the class ready to discuss the lesson and to formulate questions of their own. Teachers should begin the class with a review of key points from the video/text before starting the discussion.

Begin each lesson with appropriate introductory statements that help students focus on the lesson. Teachers should also provide a brief summary of the previous lesson and an overview of key points of the new lesson. This helps students see the ongoing narrative of scripture.

Conclude the lesson by summarizing or having students summarize the information from their notes. It is also helpful to ask questions from the lesson to determine that students grasp the concepts. Asking questions in this manner serves as an assessment to ensure objectives are met.

Challenge students with a call to action by applying this information to their lives in order to help them grow spiritually and help others to do so as well. This can be accomplished by asking students how this information relates to their spiritual development at this time and moving forward.

For more information on teaching adults, please visit:

**<https://bibletalk.tv/101/teaching>**

A student workbook is also available for this series:

**<https://bibletalk.tv/workbooks/thessalonians>**

# Lesson #1 – Introduction

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is to introduce I & II Thessalonians. Of special note in this lesson is a review of the history of Thessalonica and the circumstances around the writing of these two letters.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand why Paul wrote I & II Thessalonians.
- **Feel:** Appreciate the concern Paul had for the spiritual growth of the new Christians in Thessalonica.
- **Do:** Grow spiritually through the teachings of Paul.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 1 – Thessalonians - Introduction
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 1

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The city
- 1.1.2 The church

### 1.2 Introduction to I Thessalonians

- 1.2.1 Occasion and date of I Thessalonians
- 1.2.2 General purpose of the letter

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

## **1. Describe details of the city of Thessalonica.**

Located in a region known today as South Eastern Europe. It was originally built in 315 BC and named after the half-sister of Alexander the Great and wife of the Macedonian King, Cassander. It's location as a port city made it a prosperous city. It was made off several different cultures including Jews.

## **2. Describe the church in Thessalonica in the period when Paul worked with them.**

Paul traveled to the area in AD 51 after receiving a vision from the Lord. It was Paul's second missionary Journey (AD 49 – 52 - Acts 15 – 18). Paul spent about a month in the region with his traveling companion Silas. They experienced opposition to the work in Thessalonica from the Jews. They opposed his teachings about Jesus and stirred up a mob. They sought to have Paul arrested. To prevent additional problems for the Christians, Paul and Silas left at night and went to Berea. This prevented Paul from providing a strong foundation for these new Christians. It will be later noted that Paul praised these young Christians because of their faith.

### **3. What was a major point of confusion among the young Christians that led Paul to write this first letter to the Thessalonians?**

Due to the death of some in their congregation, the young Christians were concerned about what would happen to them if they died before the Lord returned. Paul taught them that the Lord would return but he had not had an opportunity to bring this teaching to their full understanding. Paul writes this letter to comfort them and to continue teaching them on the return of the Lord and the condition of those who had died while faithful to our Lord.

### **4. Describe some insights from the following key points from the book of I Thessalonians.**

**Paul expressing his feelings** – Paul expresses joy and gratitude for the faithfulness of the Thessalonians and their loyalty to Paul and his helpers.

**Paul defends himself** – Paul refutes the false accusations made against him. He shows how these attacks were intended to cause division and weaken the church.

**Paul encourages the young Christians** – Paul lets them know their faith was being tested and encouraged them to remain faithful. They were commended by Paul for their faithfulness.

**Paul gives further teaching** – Two critical points:  
(1) details concerning the second coming of Christ; (2) Sanctified (holy) living.

**Fellowship** – Paul continues to encourage the young Christians by expressing thanks for their fellowship with him and each other. This fellowship would continue to encourage and strengthen them.



## **5. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Satan knows he can't attack God directly, so he attacks us. He uses three strategies to attack us. First, he tries to prevent us from becoming Christians. If he does this, then he destroys us before we can grow spiritually. Second, he seeks to weaken the faith of those who have turned to God. In doing this he draw us away from God. Third, he seeks to destroy Christian influence. In doing this he discourages us from growing and continuing to serve God.

It is through our dedication to faithful living, growing in knowledge, application of Jesus' teachings and seeking a closer relationship with God that allows us to defeat Satan's attempts. This is at the heart of what Paul taught the Thessalonians, and through them, teaches us today.

# Lesson #2 – Genuine Conversion

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on Paul’s greeting and words of comfort to the young Christians in Thessalonica. Of special note in this lesson are indicators of genuine conversion.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Develop a deeper understanding of the second coming of Jesus.
- **Feel:** Express confidence in our salvation.
- **Do:** Live faithfully according to the teachings of Jesus in order to be ready for His return.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 2 – Genuine Conversion
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 2

## Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 Salutation – 1 Thessalonians 1:1
- 1.2 Thanksgiving - 1:2-10
- 1.3 Summary

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

## **1. Summarize the environment and conditions that led Paul to write to the Thessalonians.**

Thessalonica was a port city in Macedonia. Paul established a community of believers there in 51 AD and remained with them approximately one month before being forced to leave. Paul received a report from Timothy concerning the faithfulness of these Christians, but they were experiencing areas of doubt and needed encouragement to continue to grow spiritually.

## **2. Review 1 Thessalonians 1:1 and answer the following questions:**

**What is significant about the order of names in this verse?**

Normally, individuals are listed in order of prominence. In this case, Paul is the leader of this effort both as his role as an apostle and having led the effort to establish this congregation. Silvanus assisted Paul in this effort. Timothy is a young protégé of Paul.

**What is significant in Paul's use of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in the same sentence?**

Paul is equating the Son with the Father.  
This will be emphasized in following verses.

**Describe the relationship between grace and peace as Paul uses them in the salutation of his letter.**

Grace and peace are normal ways Paul begins his letters. Grace is what God grants us. As a result, the more we understand this, the greater the peace we feel from confidence in our salvation. Peace is among the spiritual blessings guaranteed by the Holy Spirit to those reconciled to God.

### **3. Outline the phrases Paul uses to describe the Thessalonians from verse 1:2-4. What is the likely effect on these young Christians?**

He gives thanks to God for them. Mentions them in His prayers, sees their work of faith, labor of love and steadfastness of hope in Christ in the presence of God the Father Who has chosen them.

This should have the effect of not only seeing Paul's deep affection for these brethren, but provided them with encouragement. As they began to face reality of the world around them and perhaps erroneous or false teaching, doubts and misunderstandings crept in. Paul assures them through these words that their place before God is not lost or in jeopardy.

A fair question would be, would Paul describe us in this way if we were receiving this letter today?

### **4. Where did Paul state his message was from and why is it important that he express this to the Thessalonians?**

Verse 1:5 – Paul states that his message comes through the power of the Holy Spirit both in word and power so as to provide conviction of its truthfulness. Furthermore, Paul reminds them that they know he, Silvanus and Timothy are from God, therefore, they can be believed.

Verse 1:6 – The message they received brought about a change in them. This change is evidence of the truthfulness of their words and of the sincere conversion of these people.

## **5. How does 1 Thessalonians 1:7-10 apply to us?**

We too should be an example to the community around us and to those with whom we come into contact. We should see a change in our lives from who we were to who we are becoming, like Christ. We should be turning away from the things in our previous life that drew us away from God. This is sometimes a gradual and difficult change, but it should be evident to us and others as well.

## **6. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

We use the word conversion to describe the change a person makes in committing to following Jesus. It is not a one-time event. Conversion means to change from one form to another. We should see this continual change in our lives as we grow spiritually.

Paul expresses confidence in the conversion of the Thessalonians because he sees their faith in action. He sees it through their lives and the impact they have on those around them. Paul wants to encourage the Thessalonians to stay faithful.

This is the message for us as well. Just like the young Christians in Thessalonica, we also experience doubt and perhaps look to return to our former lives. We must continue to resist this and stay faithful. This is what our Lord asks of us, not perfection, but faithfulness.

# Lesson #3 – True Ministers

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is a review of Paul’s defense against false teachers. Of special note in this lesson is the identity of true ministers of God’s word.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Recognize the identity of true ministers of God’s word.
- **Feel:** Internalize the identity of true ministers of God’s word.
- **Do:** Put into practice those characteristics of true ministers of God’s word.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming; (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 3 – True Ministers
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 3

## Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 Credentials of true ministers (I Thessalonians 2:1-3:13)
- 1.2 Application

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

## 1. Discuss your understanding of what ministry is.

Answers will vary but look for a focus on doing for others above self, seeking to serve for God's glory, seeking the best for others. In short, the same characteristics of agape love that makes us the representatives of Christ. See also John 13:35; John 15:8; Galatians 5:22-25.

## 2. Discuss each of the characteristics provided by Paul of a true minister of God's word.

**True ministers trust God** – (2:1-2) Trust in God is one of the elements of faith. As our knowledge of God increases so too should our trust in Him. Paul demonstrated tremendous trust as he endured persecution yet kept his eye on his role as God's servant. True ministers of God's word go beyond simply speaking and teaching the word but follow through with dedicated service to others.

**True ministers are sincere** – (2:3-12) Sincerity is seen in our genuineness. It means we put into practice those things we teach.

Paul provides two sets of characteristics – Worldly (vs 3-6) and spiritual (vs 7-12). Worldly characteristics are those that focus on self. Spiritual are those that focus on doing and being what our Lord wants and especially in our treatment of others.

**True ministers get results** – (2:13-16) Certainly any action has the potential of seeing results. We seek long lasting and positive results that bring others to our Lord on His terms. The focus is not on large numbers, although we rejoice when we see success in this way. The focus instead is on winning one soul at a time.

**True ministers love the church** – (2:17-3:13) When we are converted, we are not converted to the church, we are converted to Christ. We are then added to the church. We cannot separate the two. If we love our Lord then we will love His body, the church. Just like any loving relationship, we express our love through faithfulness. We seek out our fellow members. We support them in their efforts to serve our Lord. We are involved in their lives to help them in their efforts to develop faithfulness. We pray for each other and help each other in any way we can. In doing so we share as the first century Christians did in Acts 2:42-47 and we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).



### **3. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

This was not the first time Paul had to defend his ministry. As we are active in our ministries we will be challenged and must ensure that our motives are pure and our focus remains upon service to God. We do this by trusting our Lord, practicing what we teach, giving God the glory and staying faithful to our Lord and His church.

# Lesson #4 – True Churches

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is to identify the characteristics of churches claiming truth. Of special note in this lesson is how Paul shows that true churches are pure and must continually work to remain that way.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Identify characteristics of true churches.
- **Feel:** Appreciate the value of true churches.
- **Do:** Seek to remain faithful to our Lord by belonging to His church.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 4 – True Churches
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 4

## Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 The church purifies its conduct (1 Thessalonians 4:1-12)
- 1.2 Application

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

## **1. What comes to mind when you hear the expression, “true churches”?**

The intent of this question is to establish the idea that there is a true church and that we can both find it and be a part of it. Responses will vary but look for characteristics and elements of our Lord’s church as taught in scripture. A critical concept is that the church is not a building but the body of Christ made up of believers that have obeyed our Lord’s teachings. A good follow-up question would be, “how can we know what the true church is and how are we added to that church?”

In our various cultures and societies there are hundreds of religious bodies claiming to have the truth. Some claim that all are true and that it is wrong to believe that one is true and others are not. Yet the Lord clearly teaches through His word that there is only one body of Christ, the church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4-6). Our active faith requires we seek out the true body, one that teaches complete truth from the scriptures and follows those teachings.

## **2. Why would Paul focus on sexual and business integrity as he writes to the Thessalonians?**

These two areas have always been a challenge for humanity especially in the pagan cities of the first century. They stem from the common concept of how we interact with one another and remains a challenge for us today.

### 3. Summarize each of the following elements related to the church continually purifying its conduct (1 Thessalonians 4:1-12).

- What is meant by continually? This word communicates that it is an ongoing process. It's not something that is done once.
- **Sexual purity** (vs. 3-5) – When we become Christians we are set aside for God's use, both spiritually and physically. Sexual immorality has always been a problem with humanity so we must continue to work towards sexual purity both as individuals and as the body of Christ. Paul teaches in many places that sexual immorality has no place in a Christian's life or among Christians.
- **Integrity in business** (vs. 6) – How we interact with those around us is critical to how we are seen by the world. Again, we are called out to be pure. This includes our day-to-day interactions in the business world.
- **Purity in our public witness** (vs 9-12) – Public witness goes beyond us speaking about our Lord to others. It also involves living what we teach. We can hide most of our sins from others but eventually how we live will become known. At times others may know more about us than we think. How we live must be in line with what we profess as Christians. We are called out to be different, but that difference must be to live according to the teachings of our Lord.

#### **4. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Church does not mean a building. The church is the body of Christ. The characteristics of the body are pure and faithful living. We are called out of the world and must strive to remain pure in order to have a clear conscience and an effective witness.

Jesus helps us with this as we seek to know and follow His teachings. We help each other in this as we encourage, strengthen, forgive and accept one another.

# Lesson #5 – Preparing for the End

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on preparing for our Lord's return. Of special note in this lesson is how Paul's teachings apply to us today as we too prepare for Jesus' return.

Note that this lesson has several sections.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand Paul's teachings on the second coming of Jesus.
- **Feel:** Take comfort from Paul's teachings on the second coming of Jesus.
- **Do:** Be prepared for the Lord's return by living faithfully according to the teachings of Jesus.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 5 – Preparing for the End
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 5

## Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 The problem
- 1.2 The hope
- 1.3 The details
- 1.4 Application

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

**1. Why were the Thessalonians confused on the issue of the return of Jesus and how does this impact us today?**

The early Christians expected the Lord to return in their lifetimes. As time wore on and they began to die, their concern was what would happen to those who had already died. As a result of their confusion, their faith weakened, and they were susceptible to false teachers.

Today, more than 2,000 years later, we share the same concerns. We, too, may doubt and succumb to false teachings. Paul's words are as important to us now as they were for them. We continue to be ready by living faithfully and we learn what to expect when our Lord returns. Anyone teaching something other than Paul's words is teaching false doctrine.

## **2. How should a Christian's view of death differ from the world's view?**

Answers will vary based on a person's perspective of death and dying. This is a personal point since death impacts all of us in many ways.

The world does not have hope of a life after death, therefore, death is the end. As a result, they react with fear and denial. Some take a position that God forgives and loves everyone and therefore everyone will live in paradise forever. This is a false hope.

As we grow in our faith as Christians, we see death as a natural, physical event that is a fulfilment of our time and purpose on earth. A Christian looks beyond death to life eternal as promised by a faithful, graceful and loving God.

### **3. Based on Paul's statement in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-4, describe the difference a believer and disbeliever's understanding of hope.**

The world sees the concept of hope as a vague feeling that something might happen or they would like to happen. Sadly, many have this false hope because of the misunderstanding of scripture or having been misled into believing a false teaching.

Hope is part of the triad of spiritual blessings Paul spoke of in 1 Corinthians 13:13. It is part of the explanation of faith that the writer of Hebrews offers in Hebrews 11:1. It is a confident assurance in God's faithfulness. God promises us forgiveness for our sins through the blood of Christ. From this promise we have a confident assurance (hope) for life eternal. Early on, our view of hope may not differ from the world's view but as we grow spiritually, we begin to understand and thrive in the hope that God offers.

A key element of hope for a Christian is believe. We know we have life after death because of the resurrection of Jesus. Through this we have hope of life after death.

### **4. What does Paul say about events leading up to the second coming of Christ?**

See the text for an explanation of these points.

- Some Christians will be alive and on earth when Jesus returns.
- The faithful that have already died will rise first followed by the Christians that are still alive.
- The Lord will descend from heaven.
- The signs of his return will be unmistakable and known by all.
- The living and resurrected Christians will ascend into the clouds to be with Jesus.
- We will be with our Lord forever.
- No one knows when Christ will return but the Bible assures believers that He will return.



## **5. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

It is natural to have doubts about things we do not fully understand. God does not ask us to understand everything but to accept what He tells us as true which is the essence of faith. Our role is to learn what God wants of us, obey Him and continue to live faithfully so we are prepared for His return.

# Lesson #6 – 8 Ways to Be Ready

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on how to prepare for the return of Jesus. Of special note is to not be concern about signs of His return, but the greater importance of being prepared.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand how we can be prepared for the return of Jesus.
- **Feel:** Recognize the importance of preparing for the return of Jesus.
- **Do:** Live faithfully according to the teachings of Jesus.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 6 – 8 Ways to be Ready
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 6

## Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 The importance of being ready
- 1.2 8 ways to be ready
- 1.2 Summary

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

**1. Summarize the teachings of Jesus from Matthew 24:34 – 25:30 and answer the following questions.**

**Who does the teachings of Jesus apply to?**

Everyone. No matter your condition, we will all face judgment when our Lord returns. To those faithful, it will be a recognition of faithfulness. To those who don't know our Lord or have become unfaithful, it will be a day of judgement and punishment.

**Why is it important to be ready for the return of Jesus?**

Answers will vary but look for statements that support that when, not if, our Lord returns there will not be an opportunity to get ready. Since we don't know when that will be, we must always be ready for His return.

## 2. Summarize the 8 ways to be ready as listed in the text.

- **Watch Yourself** (vs. 4-10) – We are not in darkness as children of God. The light we have is our knowledge of the Lord and the anticipation of His return. Because of that, we remain ready. Being ready requires faithful living.
- **Build up the church** (vs. 11) – Part of our mission is to help our brethren in the Body of Christ to also remain faithful. We do that by encouraging and building up each other. This is similar to the teachings from Hebrews 10:25 regarding the habit of regular assembly.
- **Respect Your Leaders** (vs. 12-13a) – Those that lead us (elders, teachers, preachers) should receive our respect. Part of the reason is that leaders will be held to a higher standard of judgment (James 3:1).
- **Be at peace with one another** (vs. 13b-15) – Through living in peace with one another we demonstrate our love as Christ loved. Recall that in the Beatitudes, Jesus stated, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9). We can deal with our disagreements and differing views without it causing rifts within the Body of Christ. We look out for one another admonishing as Jesus would have us (Matthew 18:15-17), encouraging the faint of heart, helping the weak overcome temptations (remember, we’re all tempted in some way), expressing patience and returning good for evil.
- **Rejoice always** (vs. 16) – We must maintain joy even in the face of sorrow. The first century Christians endured unimaginable horror and persecution yet continued faithfully.

- **Pray always** (vs. 17-18) – Praying is our lifeline to the Father. This lifeline is always open and will always be answered. God promises to answer the prayers of His children.
- **Study God’s word** (vs. 19-21) – We must study, listen and apply what we learn from God’s word. In doing so we discover God’s will and draw closer to Him.
- **Be pure** (vs. 22) – Purity is another one of the Beatitudes given by Jesus as He began the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:8 He stated, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” To be impure is to engage deliberately in evil activities and attitudes. Paul instructs us to abstain from every form of evil, no matter the form it takes.

### **3. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Our Lord and Paul teach us very clearly that we must remain prepared. Our efforts begin when we are sanctified by our Lord through our repentance and obedience in baptism. From there we must live according to the teachings of Jesus. Among those teachings are that He will return and we must be ready. We don’t know when it will be, so we live a life of readiness. We know that the reward for our readiness will be beyond our ability to imagine.

# Lesson #7 – Intro to II Thessalonians

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is an introduction to Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians. Of special note in this lesson is Paul’s continuous praise and encouragement for the young Christians in Thessalonica. He also begins to provide some additional information concerning the second coming of Jesus.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** The major ideas concerning the return of Jesus at the end of the world.
- **Feel:** Recognize the importance of encouraging each other to remain faithful and prepared.
- **Do:** Live faithfully according to the teachings of Christ.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming; (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 7 – Introduction to II Thessalonians
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 7

## Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 Review of major concepts of I Thessalonians
- 1.2 Encouragement
- 1.3 Application

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

- 1. What was the condition of the Thessalonians and why Paul was writing to them?**

Thessalonica was a port city and a cross section of political, religious and non-religious groups of the time. Paul established a congregation there but not long after was forced to leave. Because of this, the young Christians did not receive the deep foundational knowledge they may have gained from a longer stay. Yet in spite of this, these Christians remained faithful. They had several questions that Paul addressed concerning the return of our Lord and how to be ready for it.

This information is important to us as we, too, await the return of Jesus. The words of encouragement and instruction from Paul teach us to be faithful and prepared because our Lord will return suddenly to gather those who have remained faithful.

## **2. What is the significance of Paul referring to both God the Father and Jesus in his opening of II Thessalonians?**

He is equating Jesus with the Father. This validates the divine power and grace of Jesus as being on an equal level with God the Father.

## **3. Read II Thessalonians 1:3-4. What was Paul's impression of the Christians in Thessalonica and why?**

Paul praises the Thessalonians and thanks God because of their faithfulness and continued desire to grow spiritually. It is easier to live faithfully when we have the presence of someone like Paul with us but in his absence, they continued as the Lord and Paul would have wanted them to. This is a true measure of their faithfulness.

#### **4. Read II Thessalonians 1:5. What encouragement does Paul offer the Thessalonians and how can that encourage us?**

We experience the challenges to our faith from internal (self) and external pressures. These pressures can be tremendous and cause us to lose heart. Paul's words of comfort and encouragement apply to us as well as he tells us:

- There is a cost to establishing God's Kingdom beginning with the suffering of Christ and continuing through each generation as Satan attacks Jesus' disciples and seeks to destroy their souls.
- God permits suffering as a way of creating a sense of endurance. In our suffering we see God's power at work and our dependence on Him.
- God will punish the unfaithful and reward the faithful.

#### **5. Read II Thessalonians 1:7. Why is Paul making the definitive statement about Jesus' return?**

The timing and form of the return of Jesus is a major question for Christians as it was for the apostles while Jesus was with them and part of the reason for writing these letters. They, like us, had questions about when it would occur. They, like us, needed encouragement to stay faithful under internal and external pressures.



## **6. Summarize our current world environment and compare it to the environment of the Christians in Thessalonica.**

Our world has not changed much regarding those who reject or misunderstand our Lord, and those that submit to Him. Those that reject Christ seek to pressure those who submit to Him. Those who misunderstand Him seek to teach their error and thus draw faithful seekers away from God. These two categories of people are agents of Satan whether they know it or not. Our role is to seek and acquire the truth from God's word, to live it and teach others. In doing this we demonstrate our faithfulness and love for God. These are the ones who our Lord will gather to Him upon His return.

## **7. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

We must continue to teach others the gospel and encourage fellow believers, whether young Christians or senior saints. When we do this we grow and help others grow into faithful disciples who are ready for the return of Jesus at any time.

# Lesson #8 – Events Before the Last Day

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is Paul’s teaching to the Thessalonians about events that must occur before Jesus’ second coming. Of special note in this lesson is the understanding that the day has not come, however, the day will come and there will be general indicators of the return. Key to all of Paul’s instructions is to remain ready.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Summarize Paul’s teachings on the second coming of Christ from Thessalonians.
- **Feel:** Defend the importance of remaining ready for the return of Christ.
- **Do:** Remain ready for Jesus’ return by faithful living.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 8 – Events Before the Last Day
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 8

## Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 General information
- 1.2 Sequence of events
- 1.3 Application

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

**1. What is meant by “apocalyptic” writing and why is it difficult to understand?**

Apocalyptic means uncovering or revealing. It was used in the ancient world to describe the content of prophecies. Part of the difficulty in understanding it was discerning its symbolic language. We have to understand the context of the writing and why it was written as well as to whom it was written and the events that were occurring at the time.

## 2. Discuss the following terms used in II Thessalonians 2:3-8.

- **Apostasy** (vs. 3) – means to fall away. In context of Paul’s teachings, it meant to fall away from following Christ. One who is not in Christ cannot fall away. Paul seems to be communicating that a great number of Christians will fall away from following Christ.
- **Man of Lawlessness/Son of Destruction** (vs. 3) – Lawlessness means sin. Several other names or terms are synonymous (Son of Destruction; Perdition; Anti-Christ). It is thought that this would be a distinct personality that would influence many to leave or depart from the teachings of Christ. We look for an individual but it may in fact not be a single person but an entity or movement.
- **Restraining Influence** (vs. 6) – This is the person or power that restrains (keeps from fully acting) the man of lawlessness. Because of the restraining influence he is unable to fully reveal his/its position or reveal himself.
- **Mystery of Lawlessness** (vs. 7) – The outworking of the apostacy. It would be the opposite of the outworking of good by followers of our Lord.
- **Breath of his mouth** (vs. 8) – The word of God, the scriptures (Revelation 2:16).
- **Appearance of His coming** (vs. 8) – The second coming or return of our Lord.

- Prophecy – As used in II Thessalonians, Paul is telling them what will happen in the future and at the end of time. Note that Paul does not conflict with Jesus' statement that no one knows the actual time of His return except God the Father (Matthew 24:36). Paul is providing signs and indicators, not a timeline.

### **3. In Acts 20:28-30, Paul says is the best response to the return of Christ. How does this relate to his warnings of a great apostasy?**

Acts 20:28-30 states, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock..." (ESV). Knowing that many will fall away, and not wanting any to fall away, we must be alert to any trends or individuals that might wander from the truth of the gospel. We should have the attitude of Christ as taught in Luke 15:2-7 because every soul is important.

#### **4. What are the characteristics of the Man of Lawlessness as discussed in II Thessalonians 2, what will he seek to do and what will happen to him?**

A kind of person whose evil is initially hidden then revealed. He opposes God and worship to God. His influence is seen before he is.

He will seek to deceive people in the name of God and Christ to seduce them to believe false teaching. Those that follow these teachings will be lost. God will give them over because of their submission to the Man of Lawlessness.

God will destroy the Man of Lawlessness and all who follow him.

#### **5. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

False teaching hurts the church. It draws people away from the truth and salvation. Satan seeks to destroy souls. In doing so, he hurts our Father. We must continuously be on guard to prevent Satan and his followers from being effective. We do this by following the truth of God's word. We must know it, communicate it and most of all, live it.

# Lesson #9 – Who is the Man of Lawlessness?

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on the identity of the Man of Lawlessness. Of special note in this lesson are four theories concerning his identity.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Summarize Paul’s teachings on the second coming of Christ from Thessalonians.
- **Feel:** Be aware of the Man of Lawlessness and his influence.
- **Do:** Remain ready for Jesus’ return by faithful living.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 9 – Who is the Man of Lawlessness
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 9

## Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 Summary of Paul’s key points
- 1.2 Common theories of the identity of the Man of Lawlessness
- 1.3 Application

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

## **1. Summarize the two primary reasons Paul is writing to the Thessalonians and what is the most important point he wants them to understand.**

Paul is thankful for the faithfulness and perseverance of these relatively young Christians in face of various adversities. Paul is especially thankful for their faithfulness despite the fact that he was not able to remain with them for a long period of time to adequately prepare them to grow. One wonders about the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of young Christians in helping those who earnestly desire to remain faithful and grow spiritually.

Paul also wanted to instruct them about being prepared for the second coming of Jesus and to remove any improper information or unnecessary concern on their part.

The most important thing Paul wishes for them to understand is that our Lord will return and that they should always remain ready.

## **2. Summarize the following theories as to who the Man of Lawlessness was.**

**The Roman Empire** – The Roman empire was thought to be the “Man of Lawlessness” because it opposed Christianity, demanded the emperor to be worshiped as a god and it promoted evil. The restraining power was thought to be the Roman government that kept the emperor’s power in check. This is an incorrect identity since it does not fit the descriptions from scripture about the Man of Lawlessness being there even to the end when Jesus returns.

The Roman emperors have been abolished long ago.

**Satan** – Some feel Satan is the Man of Lawlessness working behind the scenes to create and promote evil and will actually take on human form. It is felt the Holy Spirit is the restraining influence who will be removed at the end so Satan can take human form and be destroyed by Jesus. However, 2 Thessalonians 2:9 states that Satan is directing this person. Satan cannot divide himself. There is no indication that the Holy Spirit ever restrained anyone other than a sinful Christian nor can anyone restrain the Holy Spirit's power. Revelation 20:1-3 uses figurative language to show Satan being restrained during the Christian era by an angel, not the Holy Spirit. Satan's power today is much diminished because of our Lord's victory over death.

**The Papacy (pope)** – The system of the Papacy seems to fit this image very well. It is an apostasy of true Christianity and is very visible. When the hierarchy of the Catholic church was established it caused a separation of ministers from others. It led to the man-made authority of a pyramid system that remains and continues to grow today. There were many other teachings that grew through this movement that are in violation of the scriptures (for example: infant baptism, confessionals, transubstantiation, indulgences and the infallibility of the Pope). However, the Pope as the man of lawlessness falls short because he does not consider himself deity, only claiming authority over religious matters. Furthermore 2 Thessalonians states that the Man of Lawlessness and the system he brings about will be against Christianity. Even through its mistakes, Catholicism promotes belief in the God of the Bible, faith in Christ and moral standards. It is noteworthy that other Christian movements hold erroneous teachings as well as Catholicism.

**The principle of lawlessness** – The Bible does not say that the Man of Lawlessness is necessarily an actual man. It might be a principle of evil and rebellion in the world seen in a variety of people and movements throughout history. These movements have tried to rule without respect to God. The Man of Lawlessness will claim to be deity, perform signs and wonders and be visible worldwide. Paul states that our Lord will not return until the man of Lawlessness is being revealed to Christians by our Lord. We will know who he is.



### **3. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

We live in a time when it seems that all the world is in rebellion against God. Yet, there remain those who seek to faithfully follow our Lord, even during the darkest and harshest of times. These challenges to faith are seen even in the Church as Satan continues to try to drive people away from our Lord. Our role is to believe Jesus' teachings and follow them to the best of our ability so that when He returns, we will not be among the apostate but among the faithful.

God has never hidden His will from us. We must continue to study, internalize and act upon God's will beginning with our initial obedience and following through to faithful living until His return.

# Lesson #10 – What is the Deluding Influence?

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on the nature of God’s will and how it accommodates man’s will in relation to his ability to choose or reject salvation. Of special note in this lesson is the importance of being and remaining prepared for the second coming of our Lord.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Summarize Paul’s teachings on the second coming of Christ from Thessalonians.
- **Feel:** Defend the importance of remaining ready for the return of Christ.
- **Do:** Remain ready for Jesus’ return by faithful living.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 10 – What is the Deluding Influence
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 10

## Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 The will of God
- 1.2 The way of truth
- 1.3 Will and salvation
- 1.4 Lessons

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

- 1. What two events does Paul state must occur before our Lord’s return and why is he teaching this?**

The apostasy and the appearance of the Man of Lawlessness. There may be various reasons why but Paul wanted to offer the young Christians in Thessalonica assurance that our Lord has not already come. He further wanted to overcome their concern about what would happen to those Christians who have died or will die before the Lord returns.

## 2. Explain the concept of “God’s will.”

There are two sides to God’s will:

- **God’s direct will** – God’s direct will includes His will for good things to happen. Creation, man’s salvation and the recording and preservation of His word are examples. God wills these good things to happen. God’s will also includes negative things such as judgment and punishment. God directly willed the flood, plagues and other nations to punish Israel as examples of this. God uses negative things to accomplish His justice and purposes.
- **God’s permissive will** – There is God’s permissive positive will. This is seen when men look to do things that obey God’s directives and bring Him the glory. Our evangelistic efforts, studying to learn more and sharing what we learn from God’s word are examples of this. God permits us to make decisions on how we carry out His will. God’s permissive negative will includes things God permits but are not blessings in themselves. Satan’s influence is an example. God did not devise the devils schemes but allows them and the negative consequences that are a result.

### 3. Describe what Paul teaches as “the way of truth” (II Thessalonians 2:13-17).

Paul is using this concept to offer encouragement to the Christians in Thessalonica as well as ourselves today as we continue to live in a world surrounded with evil.

He states two key factors:

**They have been chosen for salvation** (vs. 13) – This is not the false teaching of predestination in an arbitrary sense. Paul explains that God chooses for Himself those who are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit because of their obedient faith. This includes all who will obey. As we continue in faithfulness we are transformed by the Holy Spirit. Note, we do not transform ourselves but change as we submit more our wills to the will of the Spirit.

**Their salvation was sure** (vs. 14) – As we grow spiritually we come to grow in our assurance of salvation that will culminate with the return of our Lord. Young Christians naturally wonder about their salvation or do not have a strong conviction about it. As we grow, so does our conviction. This assurance and conviction help us to stand firm in our faith, resist temptation and become confident that God will fulfill His promises.

#### **4. Explain the statements in these verses that Paul points out and discuss what they mean to you as a child of God.**

Answers as to what it means will vary.

- **He loves** (vs. 13) – God is motivated by love.
- **He chooses** (vs. 13) – God chose to save all who would obey Him. He chooses to reward them with an eternal relationship with Him.
- **He calls** (vs. 14) – God intentionally calls everyone to glory through the gospel.
- **He saves** (vs. 13) – God wills all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4) This is the ultimate purpose of His revealed will.
- **He glorifies** (vs. 14) – All who respond to Him he makes glorious like His Son.

#### **5. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

It is God's will to save us but must be our will to be saved. Do we reject, refuse or ignore His call? Refusing to obey the gospel is to refuse the Holy Spirit's call.

God offers us salvation but gives us the choice to obey or reject it. Our role is to trust and obey. When we do, we grow in comfort and strength enabling us to continue to grow in faithfulness. This forms a positive spiritual growth pattern that continually brings us closer to God.

# Lesson #11 – The Judgement Day

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on the teachings of Jesus about His return as taught in Matthew 24-25. Of special note in this lesson is the need for preparedness for this event. Given the complexity of this lesson, consideration should be given to teaching it over several lessons.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand Jesus' teachings on His return as taught in Matthew 24 and 25.
- **Feel:** Respond favorably to the awareness that our Lord will return.
- **Do:** Practice the teachings of Jesus to demonstrate preparedness for His return.

## Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming; (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 11 – The Judgment Day
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 11

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.1 The views of the return of our Lord (Matthew 24-25)

1.1.1 Panoramic view – vs. 4-14

1.1.2 Telescope to Jerusalem view – vs. 15-34

1.1.3 Telescope to the second coming – vs. 36-44

### 1.2 Exhortations to vigilance Matthew 24:45-25:30

### 1.3 Lessons

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

## **1. From Matthew 24:1-3, what was the reason Jesus chose to teach about His return?**

The apostles pointed out the temple buildings with a sense of awe. It continued to be the belief of the Jews that the Messiah would restore Israel to its former physical power and glory. Jerusalem as the capital, and the Temple as the center of power would be primary in this belief. Jesus, therefore, had to remind them that His Kingdom was spiritual in nature, not physical. This also provided a lead in to key teachings about His return.

## **2. What two questions are asked in Matthew 24:1-3?**

When will the Temple be destroyed? What signs will accompany the end of the world that will be brought on by the second coming?

## **3. Summarize the three views taught in Matthew 4 regarding destruction of the Temple and the return of our Lord.**

- **Panoramic view** (vs. 4-14) – Our Lord describes an overview of world history that includes the period before the destruction of the Temple.
- **Telescope to Jerusalem view** (vs. 15-34) – Jesus details signs of the destruction itself that occurred in 70 AD, approximately 40 years into the future.
- **Telescope to the second coming** (vs. 36-44) – This is a view of the return of Jesus and judgment at the end of the world.

#### **4. Summarize key elements of the period until the second coming (vs. 4-15).**

- Vs. 4 - The teaching is designed to help us identify and avoid false teachings about our Lord's return. Recall that Paul is writing to the Christians in Thessalonica who were being confused by false teachers. We also face these errors and false teachings today.
- Vs. 5-8 – The cycle of false teachers and world troubles will continue, even worsening until our Lord returns. There's an inherent contrast between the strife and stress of the world and the peace offered by Jesus.
- Vs. 9-12 – These verses parallel Paul's teachings from II Thessalonians regarding the falling away, Man of Lawlessness and cycle of evil and revival seen throughout human history.
- Vs. 13 – The Lord promises that the faithful will be saved regardless of trials and evil.
- Vs. 14 – Jesus promises the great commission (teaching the lost) will be carried out before the end comes. This is especially important to us today as we seek the lost. We must continue to faithfully obey our Lord's directive to take the gospel to all the world.



## **5. What are the results Jesus describes regarding the destruction of Jerusalem (vs. 15-35)?**

As time progressed, the Jews continued to resist Rome. Eventually, Rome sent in troops to destroy the rebellion. In doing so, Rome destroyed the city and the Temple. Jerusalem and the Temple were of such great importance to the Jews, that its destruction would be an ending to everything they held important. In a sense it was the end of their world as they knew it.

Jesus provides signs that would occur before this would happen. The faithful would recognize the signs and leave. Those that did not leave would suffer great distress with over 1 million killed and their way of life destroyed.

## **6. Summarize Jesus' teachings on His return from vs. 36-44.**

Jesus shifts His teachings from the destruction of Jerusalem to that of His return. He clearly states that God the Father (the creator) only knows when this will occur. There would be no sign that indicates the return is imminent, in fact, all will seem normal (whatever is considered normal). Unbelievers will not prepare themselves, but believers will.

This chapter prepares the way for Jesus' teachings on the importance of being prepared for the certainty of His return.

## 7. Summarize the parables Jesus teaches in Matthew 24:45 – 25:30.

**Parable of the Evil Slave** (vs. 45-51) – Many assume that since the end is far away that we have plenty of time to live as we wish. The truth is, we must be ready since we do not know when it will occur.

**Parable of the 10 Virgins** (25:1-13) – Those not prepared are foolish and will suffer the consequences of not being allowed into the presence of the Father.

**Parable of the Talents** (vs. 14-30) – This warning is for those of us in God’s Kingdom that we must use the gifts our Lord has blessed us with to His glory. It isn’t so much that we must be “super achievers”, but we should pay attention to use the blessings God gives. This concept reaches all the way back to the promise made by God to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-2. God blessed Abram so that he would be a blessing to others. The blessing spoken of was, of course, our Lord and His sacrifice for our sins. This remains our purpose today. God has gifted us with many ways and opportunities to teach others about salvation through Jesus. We must use all we have to do this to the best of our abilities. No matter how much or little one has been blessed, we must use our blessings for the Master’s glory.

## **8. Why should faithful Christians not fear the return of our Lord?**

To those who are faithful, judgment will be a validation of their faithfulness. To those not faithful, it will be a sentencing based on their unfaithfulness. To the faithful, a day of glory beyond our ability to comprehend that will be enjoyed forever. To the unfaithful and unprepared, the worst day of their existence to be suffered forever.

Our Lord does not ask marvelous actions on our part. He asks us to be humble, faithful, and love for others as we serve Him in this life.

A parallel teaching of Jesus from Matthew 22:36-40 affects our judgment. The two greatest commands: Love God with all our heart, soul and mind, and love our neighbor as ourselves. This passage illustrates humility, faithfulness and love.

## **9. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Our Father loves us so much that He wants us to be prepared. He doesn't want any to be lost. Our role is to obey His commands to be granted citizenship in His Kingdom and to serve faithfully to the best of our ability. We are not earning salvation, but our faith demonstrates our love for God.

# Lesson #12 – Be Ready

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## Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is a summary of Paul’s teachings on being ready for Jesus’ return. Of special note in this lesson is his teachings about prayer and doing good.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand Paul’s teachings about being ready for the return of Jesus.
- **Feel:** Recognize the importance of faithfulness in our service to God.
- **Do:** Apply the teachings of Paul on how to remain ready for the return of our Lord.

## Lesson Support

- Series – I & II Thessalonians – Preparing for the Second Coming (Mazzalongo)
- Video – Lesson 12 – Be Ready
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 12

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.1 Paul’s exhortations

#### 1.1.1 Exhortation #1 – Pray

#### 1.1.2 Exhortation #2 – Stay busy doing good

### 1.2 Closing remarks

### 1.3 Lessons

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

## **1. What are the major elements of Paul's letters to the Thessalonians?**

The purpose of this question is to see what students feel is important to them from these letters. Answers will vary but look for the following:

- Paul's thankfulness for their faithfulness in spite of persecution and trials. We gain encouragement to do the same.
- Paul defends his conduct against false accusations. We too must be ready to defend our actions as we faithfully apply God's word in our lives. We recognize we are not perfect and make mistakes, but we strive to live faithfully according to the teachings of Jesus.
- Paul's teachings about the return of Jesus. These teachings help us stay alert and faithful.
- Paul's teachings to remain steadfast. He further teaches that remaining steadfast requires that we practice faith each day and avoid false teachings.

## **2. What were the major things Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to pray for and how do these apply to us? (II Thessalonians 3:1-5)**

- Pray that the gospel will continue to be spread. This remains a critical priority for us today therefore, we should pray for this continuously.
- Paul requested prayers for himself as he was persecuted for spreading the gospel. This personal prayer was not for physical relief, but rather so he could continue to fulfill his mission. See also Ephesians 6:19-20. We pray as well for relief from the challenges in our lives but we should do this so that we can offer even greater service to the Lord.
- Paul reassures the Christians and in doing so encourages their faith. We might not see immediate results from our prayers, but we must continue to pray because God will answer these prayers in His own time and way.

### **3. What is Paul's encouragement to the Christians from II Thessalonians 3:6-15?**

Paul commands (rather strong language but it shows the importance of the encouragement) the Christians to keep away from those who live an unruly (unfaithful) life. This includes laziness and an undisciplined and unrepentant life. In doing so they not only protect themselves from unfaithfulness, but also identify those not living as our Lord wishes. Our desire is not to show ourselves better than others, but to teach by our example as well as our words how the Lord wishes us to live as faithful servants.

Paul points out the examples of the apostles in doing so. We follow the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the apostles as they applied the teachings of Jesus.

Paul further encourages them to not become discouraged. Christianity is a way of life. It encompasses all elements of our lives. God is faithful to His promise so we must take an eternal view of life.

Paul teaches us that we must discipline those who do not live as our Lord commands. This is done with love and with the goal of bringing back into obedience those who may have strayed. Discipline is not done through punishment but by teaching. Paul uses strong language in this passage as he states to not associate with the unfaithful. This should be seen as a last effort and not first. This is in keeping with our Lord's teachings from Matthew 18:15-17. If someone wanders from the truth and does not repent, our relationship changes from a fellow Christian to a teacher and his student. We must be careful, however, that our judgment of the situation is based on the standard of the teachings of Jesus and not our personal likes or dislikes, or our personal understanding. A person may understand a concept from scripture differently than we do. This is not necessarily to say they are unfaithful or wrong.

#### **4. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Paul concludes these letters with a warm and loving prayer that God's grace will continue to be shown to the Thessalonians. As we read these letters today, we can be assured that grace continues to be given to us as well.

The overall theme of Paul's teaching serves as a template for our faithfulness:

- **Believe the truth** (demonstrated by our obedience to the truth)
- **Pray always** (constant communication with our Lord)
- **Stay busy doing good** (our role is to serve...we must be busy doing so.)

Always remember: Stay faithful and give God the glory! In doing so, when our Lord returns, we will hear, "Well done good and faithful servant."