



## **LIFE GROUP STUDIES**

### **1 Thessalonians**

1. 1:1-10 Transformed by Hope
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# One Thessalonians - Life Group Studies

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## On Letter Writing and Receiving

Have you ever written or received a letter? Some younger people haven't! In an age of instant messaging and email, the postal system has drastically changed since the internet came along and changed everything. Junk mail aside, your mailbox at home might be relatively empty. People used to write to each other! In New Testament times, the Roman postal system was quite effective, and the Apostles sent letters to churches all over the empire.

Just as modern letters have a particular set format (like name, address, subject, date, dear sir or madam, etc), ancient letters also had some standard conventions. They often started with the person's name who wrote the letter, followed by a prayer of blessing or thanksgiving ('grace and peace...'), followed by a main section and finishing with some final instructions, greetings and a benediction. First Thessalonians has this typical format, and like the other New Testament letters, we have the opportunity to read someone else's mail! It was intended to be read to the whole church (see 1 Thess 5:27), and quickly became shared with other churches and widely acknowledged to be God's Word for his church of every age. That means that this letter was written for us too.

## Why this letter? Why study it today?

This letter contains great hope! It is one of the most encouraging of all the New Testament letters and likely the earliest one written. It contains **a promise of Jesus' return in every chapter**, and so reminds us that the gospel prepares us today for that future certainty. *How should we live here and now in light of the end?*



1 Thessalonians provides some tremendous help! We are reliant on the past to live faithfully in the present, but we also live differently today when we recognise our future reality.

## Head, Heart, and Hands: Application Matters



These studies are intended to promote discussion with a particular emphasis on view. It's not merely about filling heads with knowledge (although that isn't a bad thing sometimes!), but we need to allow God's word to impact us deeper. It is written to challenge us, and, with the Holy Spirit's help, to change us from the inside out. Make sure you leave time for application questions that help that process – to discuss why this matters for our lives, how it might apply to your present situation at work, home, school, uni or with your friends, and how we might prayerfully and faithfully respond to what we discover together. Keep asking: *how is this encouraging me to think, feel and act?*

## Helpful Resources

[The Bible Project](#) – overview of 1 Thessalonians.

A Commentary by David Chapman – via [the Gospel Coalition website](#).

[David Suchet](#) reading the NIVUK version (12 minute youtube)



## Songs for 1 Thessalonians

(with thanks to the One Hope Song Leaders Team!)

[Until that Day Comes](#) – Sean Carter

[Christ Our Hope in Life and Death](#) – Keith and Kristyn Getty

[There is Hope](#) – Cityalight

[Is He Worthy](#) – Andrew Peterson

[On that Day](#) - Cityalight

[We Belong to the Day](#) – Emu Music (Michael Morrow)

[Day after day, Jesus Reigns](#) – Cityalight

[Spotify Playlist:](#)



## Transformed by Hope - 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10



**[START HERE!] Opening Question:** What do you hope for and how does hope make a difference in your life here and now? *Discuss.*

### READ 1:1

What do you notice about the beginning of this letter?

The Thessalonians are a church in Thessalonica and 'in God.' How are the church's two homes encouraging or challenging for you in your church?

### READ 2-5

How are the Thessalonians prayed for regularly? How might we pray similar prayers?

This church was 'chosen' by God. On what basis was that the case? How is this an encouragement?

How had Paul and his friends presented the gospel to them? (See also Acts 17:1-9)

### READ 6-10

In what ways can we be examples to others like the Thessalonians were?

What idols have you turned from?

In what ways do you serve the 'living and true God'?

These are two important aspects of Christian conversion (turning and serving/waiting). How might we overemphasise one above the other today?

How is salvation something past, present and future?

### APPLICATION:

What do you think is the take-away message of this chapter?

How can you pray in light of what we've read?

[Thank God for the privilege of studying his word, the encouragement we receive from other Christians, and the joy of finding his will for our lives in the scriptures]

## Hope in a Hostile World - 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16



**Opening Question:** What kinds of opposition to their faith do Christians face today?

### READ 2:1-12

What motivated Paul and his coworkers in their ministry?

What treatment did Paul receive in Philippi? (v2 - see Acts 16:19-24)

How is Paul's heart for others on display here?

In what ways did they conduct themselves in their ministry among the Thessalonians? (how was their ministry like a nursing mother (v7) and like a father (v11)?)

### READ 13-16

What was their primary focus? How is that to be the same today?

In what ways is the Word of God at work in your life? (v13)

What consequences of the gospel does this describe for us in verses 14-16?

How is this similar or different today?

### APPLICATION:

Who is the hero of the story here in verses 1-16? (hint: look for a word that appears 14 times in 16 verses!)

How is that important for us when we share our testimony with others?

Who can we be praying for together that needs to hear this message? **Pray together.**

# STUDY THREE



## Faith, Hope, & Love - 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:12



**Opening Question:** “All you need is love.” Discuss!

### READ 2:17 – 3:5

Paul is sometimes portrayed as harsh and unloving. How does this describe Paul’s heart for this church?

Why did Paul send Timothy to Thessalonica?

What was Paul’s message to them concerning suffering?

### READ 3:6-10

How important is it to you that other Christians grow in their faith?

How could we be praying for ourselves or others to grow in faith?

### READ 3:11-13

What do you think are the biggest threats to your faith?

How can this passage help strengthen and comfort you in those moments?

### APPLICATION:

How is your love for other Christians evident in your life?

How can you ensure this love is growing?

**Extra time:** Read 1 Corinthians 13. How is the ultimate display of love (shown in Christ’s saving work) the motivating force behind our love?

**Pray!**

# STUDY FOUR



## Encouraged by Hope - 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12



**Opening Question:** If you were to ask people about how they might please God, what answers do you think they'd come up with? What would you agree with?

### READ 4:1-8

How had the Thessalonians been living out their faith?

What does Paul urge them to do now?

Why is holiness and honour in the area of sexuality relevant and important for Christians today?

How should the lives of Christians look different to non-Christians? (see verses 3-8)

### READ 9-12

What responsibilities do we have toward one another?

What attitudes towards work conflict with verse 11 today?

How else (from these verses) should the lives of Christians look different to non-Christians?

How do you think you walk faithfully or fall short when it comes to verses 11- 12?

### APPLICATION:

If a friend explained to you that they were seeking God's will for their life as they faced an important decision, how might these verses help them to make a godly choice?

How can we practically keep loving one another, and walking in this truth together?

**Pray** in light of what you've learned.

## Hope's Fulfilment - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11



**Opening Question:** What do people you know believe about death?

How does it impact the way they live?

### READ 4:13-18

What kind of sleep is Paul talking about here, and why is it important?

Why don't Christians grieve in the same way as those with no hope?

How does hope help us endure here and now?

How might this hope help when you reflect on the death of a Christian friend or family member?

What might it look like to 'encourage one another' with these words (v18)?

### READ 5:1-11

What is the 'day of the Lord'?

What are the two metaphors that Paul uses to describe the timing of Jesus' return? Why do you think he used this way to convey that?

How is it that some belong to the day and some to the night?

How is salvation a helmet?

### APPLICATION:

What is the reason for our hope on that coming day of wrath?

**Pray** – think of something to thank God for... something to confess to God... something to ask God for.



## Together in Hope - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

**Opening Question:** What makes for the best kind of teamwork?

(in sport, at work or school, in a family, in a church?)

### READ 12-15

How are Christians called to love their leaders?

What kind of community is Paul encouraging here?

In what ways have you seen these things enacted?

How could we do this more and more? (For those in leadership, or with one another).

### READ 16-22

What helpful insights are listed here for when we gather together as a church?

What does it mean to quench the Spirit? How do we avoid that?

### READ 23-28

What will God do, and why can we be so confident about it?

How is the church called to be like a family?

### APPLICATION:

What have you learnt through this series on 1 Thessalonians?

What could you share with a non-christian friend about this?

**Pray!**