

Workbook On 1 & 2 Thessalonians



The White Tower, the symbol of Thessalonica

“We thank God always for all of you as we mention you constantly in our prayers, because we recall in the presence of our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:2-4 NET)

David Padfield

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1 and 2 Thessalonians

Writing with gratitude and affection to a church that he had visited only briefly, Paul's first and second epistles to the Thessalonians offer words of encouragement to a faithful but struggling church, and they focus particularly on the encouragement offered by the return of Christ.

Author

First Thessalonians went unchallenged as a Pauline epistle until the nineteenth century, when radical critics claimed that its dearth of doctrinal content made its authenticity suspect. But the proportion of doctrinal teaching in Paul's epistles varies widely, and 1 Thessalonians was written to deal with one particular doctrinal issue—the return of Christ.

The external attestation to the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is even stronger than that for 1 Thessalonians. Internally, the vocabulary, style, and doctrinal content support the claims in 2 Thessalonians 1:1 and 3:7 that it was written by Paul.

Date

Both Thessalonian epistles were written during Paul's second missionary journey, thus making them among the earliest of the New Testament books. After a brief stay in Thessalonica, the capital city of Macedonia, Paul journeyed to the south through Berea and Athens to Corinth, where he spent eighteen months. During the early part of his stay in Corinth from A.D. 51 to 52, Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians.

A few months later, while Paul was still in Corinth, he received word from Thessalonica that his teaching on the day of the Lord had been misunderstood by some in the Thessalonian church. Paul then wrote another epistle, 2 Thessalonians, to correct certain misunderstandings and further to encourage the church.

In Paul's time, Thessalonica was the prominent seaport and the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. This prosperous city was located on the *Via Egnatia*, the main road from Rome to the east, and was within sight of Mount Olympus, legendary home of the Greek pantheon.

A city of perhaps 200,000 in the first century A.D., Thessalonica had a sizable Jewish population, and the ethical monotheism of the Jewish religion attracted many Gentiles who had become disenchanted with Greek paganism. According to 1 Thessalonians 1:9 and 2:14–16, most of the Thessalonian converts were Gentiles who came out of idolatry.

Themes and Literary Structure

After Paul's forced separation from the Thessalonians (Acts 17:1–9), he grew increasingly concerned about the progress of their faith. First Thessalonians was written to commend and encourage the Thessalonian believers, who were enduring persecution, and to offer consolation concerning their loved ones who had died in Christ. The theme of Christ's coming recurs throughout the epistle, and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 provides one of the fullest New Testament treatments of this crucial truth. The two major sections of I Thessalonians are: Paul's personal reflections of the Thessalonians (chs. 1–3), and Paul's instructions for the Thessalonians (chs. 4–5).

Second Thessalonians is the theological sequel to First Thessalonians. Not long after receiving I Thessalonians from Paul, some of the Thessalonian believers fell prey to false teaching, thinking the final day of the Lord had already begun. Paul wrote this brief letter to correct that error by pointing out that certain identifiable events will precede the final day of the Lord and to encourage the Thessalonian believers, whose faith was being tested by persecution. Addressing the problem of those who refused to work because they thought the end was near or already upon them, Paul encouraged the Thessalonian Christians to attend to their labors and not to live off others. Second Thessalonians may be divided into three major sections: Paul's encouragement in persecution (ch. 1); Paul's explanation of the day of the Lord (ch. 2); and Paul's exhortation to the church (ch. 3).

Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts



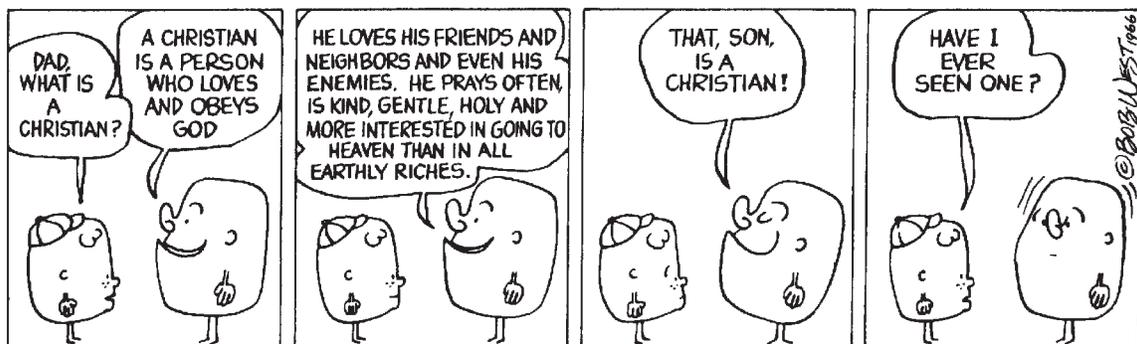
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10



1 From Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace and peace to you! 2 We thank God always for all of you as we mention you constantly in our prayers, 3 because we recall in the presence of our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 We know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 in that our gospel did not come to you merely in words, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (surely you recall the character we displayed when we came among you to help you). 6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, when you received the message with joy that comes from the Holy Spirit, despite great affliction. 7 As a result you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For from you the message of the Lord has echoed forth not just in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place reports of your faith in God have spread, so that we do not need to say anything. 9 For people everywhere report how you welcomed us and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath.

Greetings From Paul

1. What do we know about Sylvanus and Timothy?
2. Why did Paul constantly remember these brethren in prayer?
3. *How* has God chosen us?
4. How did the gospel come to Thessalonica? Does it come the same way to us today?
5. What two things accompanied the reception of the word?
6. In what way were the Thessalonians “an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia”?
7. What happened when those in Thessalonica turned to God?
8. What does Jesus deliver us from?



1 Thessalonians 2:1–12



1 For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, about our coming to you—it has not proven to be purposeless. 2 But although we suffered earlier and were mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of much opposition. 3 For the appeal we make does not come from error or impurity or with deceit, 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we declare it, not to please people but God, who examines our hearts. 5 For we never appeared with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is our witness— 6 nor to seek glory from people, either from you or from others, 7 although we could have imposed our weight as apostles of Christ; instead we became little children among you. Like a nursing mother caring for her own children, 8 with such affection for you we were happy to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. 9 For you recall, brothers and sisters, our toil and drudgery: By working night and day so as not to impose a burden on any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and so is God, as to how holy and righteous and blameless our conduct was toward you who believe. 11 As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his own children, 12 exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you live in a way worthy of God who calls you to his own kingdom and his glory.

Paul's Manner Of Life

1. What happened to Paul at Philippi?
2. After his poor treatment in Philippi, how did Paul preach the gospel in Thessalonica?
3. What was Paul entrusted with? When did he receive this trust?
4. What did Paul deny using at Thessalonica?
5. How did Paul treat the saints at Thessalonica?
6. What did Paul impart to those at Thessalonica?
7. Describe Paul's manner of life while at Thessalonica.
8. What does it mean to "live in a way worthy of God"?
9. How did God call us to "His own kingdom and His glory"?

1 Thessalonians 2:13–20



13 And so we too constantly thank God that when you received God's message that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human message, but as it truly is, God's message, which is at work among you who believe.

14 For you became imitators, brothers and sisters, of God's churches in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, because you too suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they in fact did from the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and persecuted us severely. They are displeasing to God and are opposed to all people, 16 because they hinder us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. Thus they constantly fill up their measure of sins, but wrath has come upon them completely.

17 But when we were separated from you, brothers and sisters, for a short time (in presence, not in affection) we became all the more fervent in our great desire to see you in person. 18 For we wanted to come to you (I, Paul, in fact tried again and again) but Satan thwarted us. 19 For who is our hope or joy or crown to boast of before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not of course you? 20 For you are our glory and joy!

Receiving The Lord

1. How did the Thessalonians receive the word of God?
2. How does God's message work in those who believe?
3. How were the Thessalonians to become *imitators* of the churches in Judea?
4. At whose hands did the Thessalonians suffer?
5. How does Paul describe the Judeans?
6. Explain this phrase: "fill up their measure of sins."
7. What did Paul eagerly desire?
8. Who had hindered Paul? How did this happen?
9. Who was Paul's hope, joy, and crown of rejoicing?

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13



1 So when we could bear it no longer, we decided to stay on in Athens alone. 2 We sent Timothy, our brother and fellow worker for God in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen you and encourage you about your faith, 3 so that no one would be shaken by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. 4 For in fact when we were with you, we were telling you in advance that we would suffer affliction, and so it has happened, as you well know. 5 So when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter somehow tempted you and our toil had proven useless. 6 But now Timothy has come to us from you and given us the good news of your faith and love and that you always think of us with affection and long to see us just as we also long to see you! 7 So in all our distress and affliction, we were reassured about you, brothers and sisters, through your faith. 8 For now we are alive again, if you stand firm in the Lord. 9 For how can we thank God enough for you, for all the joy we feel because of you before our God? 10 We pray earnestly night and day to see you in person and make up what may be lacking in your faith. 11 Now may God our Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. 12 And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we do for you, 13 so that your hearts are strengthened in holiness to be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

The Work Of Timothy

1. Who did Paul send from Athens? Why was this man chosen?
2. What was this messenger of Paul to do at Thessalonica?
3. What were those at Thessalonica *destined* for?
4. What great concern did Paul express in 1 Thessalonians 3:5?
5. What did Timothy bring to Paul?
6. How was Paul comforted in the midst of his affliction?
7. What was Paul's prayer "night and day"?
8. How would God *direct* Paul's way to Thessalonica?
9. In what item did Paul desire the Thessalonians to increase?
10. How are our hearts strengthened in holiness?

1 Thessalonians 4:1–8

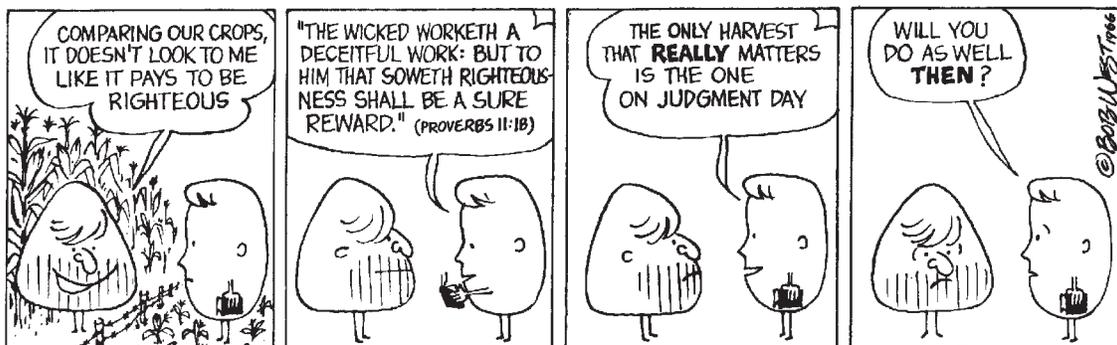


1 Finally then, brothers and sisters, we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received instruction from us about how you must live and please God (as you are in fact living) that you do so more and more.

2 For you know what commands we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is God's will: that you become holy, that you keep away from sexual immorality, 4 that each of you know how to possess his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God. 6 In this matter no one should violate the rights of his brother or take advantage of him, because the Lord is the avenger in all these cases, as we also told you earlier and warned you solemnly. 7 For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. 8 Consequently the one who rejects this is not rejecting human authority but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Exhortations For Moral Purity

1. What did Paul *urge* the brethren to do?
2. What did the brethren receive from Paul?
3. What commandments did Paul deliver to them?
4. What is included in the phrase *sexual immorality*?
5. How does Paul describe the Gentiles?
6. How could one "violate the rights of his brother"?
7. Who is the *avenger*? What does this mean?
8. What did God "call us to"?



1 Thessalonians 4:9–18



9 Now on the topic of brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. 10 And indeed you are practicing it toward all the brothers and sisters in all of Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, 11 to aspire to lead a quiet life, to attend to your own business, and to work with your hands, as we commanded you. 12 In this way you will live a decent life before outsiders and not be in need. 13 Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep as Christians. 15 For we tell you this by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be suddenly caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

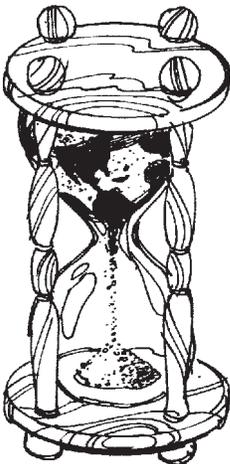
Brotherly Love

1. How are we “taught by God to love one another”?
2. What did Paul encourage the brethren to increase in?
3. What should we aspire to?
4. How can we “live a decent life before outsiders”?
5. Who are those who are *asleep*?
6. How are we to *grieve*? How is this different from non-Christians?
7. Give the chronology of the events listed in 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17.
8. What group of people will *go ahead*? Why?
9. How long will those who are “caught up” going to be with the Lord?
10. How do the words of this chapter bring comfort?

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11



1 Now on the topic of times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you. 2 For you know quite well that the day of the Lord will come in the same way as a thief in the night. 3 Now when they are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will surely not escape. 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in the darkness for the day to overtake you like a thief would. 5 For you all are sons of the light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness. 6 So then we must not sleep as the rest, but must stay alert and sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But since we are of the day, we must stay sober by putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet our hope for salvation. 9 For God did not destine us for wrath but for gaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that whether we are alert or asleep we will come to life together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, just as you are in fact doing.



The Day Of The Lord

1. What are the "times and seasons" referred to in verse one?
2. What is "the day of the Lord"? How is it described?
3. When will "sudden destruction" come? How many will escape?
4. Why should we be able to avoid being surprised in that day?
5. Why are evil men described as being "of the night" and "of the darkness"?
6. What items are Christians to "put on"?
7. What did God appoint us to?
8. What can we learn from 1 Thessalonians 5:10?
9. How can we encourage one another?

1 Thessalonians 5:12–28



12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who labor among you and preside over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them most highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the undisciplined, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient toward all. 15 See that no one pays back evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all. 16 Always rejoice, 17 constantly pray, 18 in everything give thanks. For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not extinguish the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt. 21 But examine all things; hold fast to what is good. 22 Stay away from every form of evil. 23 Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is trustworthy, and he will in fact do this. 25 Brothers and sisters, pray for us too. 26 Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. 27 I call on you solemnly in the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters. 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Further Exhortations

1. How are we “acknowledge those who labor among you”? Who are these people? How should we regard them?
2. How can we “be at peace” among ourselves?
3. What four admonitions are given in 1 Thessalonians 5:14?
4. What should we pursue with all men?
5. What does it mean to “constantly pray”?
6. How could one “extinguish the Spirit”?
7. Explain this phrase: “stay away from every form of evil.”
8. How are we “kept entirely blameless” until the coming of the Lord?
9. What is the “holy kiss”?
10. What charge did Paul end this book with?

2 Thessalonians 1:1–12



1 From Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! 3 We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith flourishes more and more and the love of each one of you all for one another is ever greater. 4 As a result we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions you are enduring. 5 This is evidence of God's righteous judgment, to make you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which in fact you are suffering. 6 For it is right for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to you who are being afflicted to give rest together with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. 8 With flaming fire he will mete out punishment on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will undergo the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength, 10 when he comes to be glorified among his saints and admired on that day among all who have believed—and you did in fact believe our testimony. 11 And in this regard we pray for you always, that our God will make you worthy of his calling and fulfill by his power your every desire for goodness and every work of faith, 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Tribulation And Rest

1. What is “the church of the Thessalonians”?
2. Why did Paul give thanks to God?
3. What did Paul boast about?
4. What is the “evidence of the righteous judgment of God”?
5. How is one made “worthy of the kingdom of God”?
6. What did Paul consider to be “right for God”?
7. What will happen to the unrighteous when Christ returns?
8. How will Christ “be glorified among his saints and admired on that day among all who have believed”?
9. How does God make us worthy and fulfill His power in us?
10. In this passage, *how* is the name of Christ glorified?

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12



1 Now regarding the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to be with him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, 2 not to be easily shaken from your composure or disturbed by any kind of spirit or message or letter allegedly from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not arrive until the rebellion comes and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. 4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, and as a result he takes his seat in God's temple, displaying himself as God. 5 Surely you recall that I used to tell you these things while I was still with you. 6 And so you know what holds him back, so that he will be revealed in his own time. 7 For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work. However, the one who holds him back will do so until he is taken out of the way, 8 and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will destroy by the breath of his mouth and wipe out by the manifestation of his arrival. 9 The arrival of the lawless one will be by Satan's working with all kinds of miracles and signs and false wonders, 10 and with every kind of evil deception directed against those who are perishing, because they found no place in their hearts for the truth so as to be saved. 11 Consequently God sends on them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false. 12 And so all of them who have not believed the truth but have delighted in evil will be condemned.

The Falling Away

1. Over what topic could some of the brethren be “easily shaken”?
2. What *day* did some of the brethren think had already come?
3. What has to take place before *that Day* comes?
4. Who or what is “the man of lawlessness”?
5. How is “the son of destruction” described in this passage?
6. What was being *held back* in this passage?
7. What is the “power of lawlessness”?
8. What was to accompany “the lawless one”?
9. What did God promise to send to some people? Why?
10. Why did the people mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:12 perish?

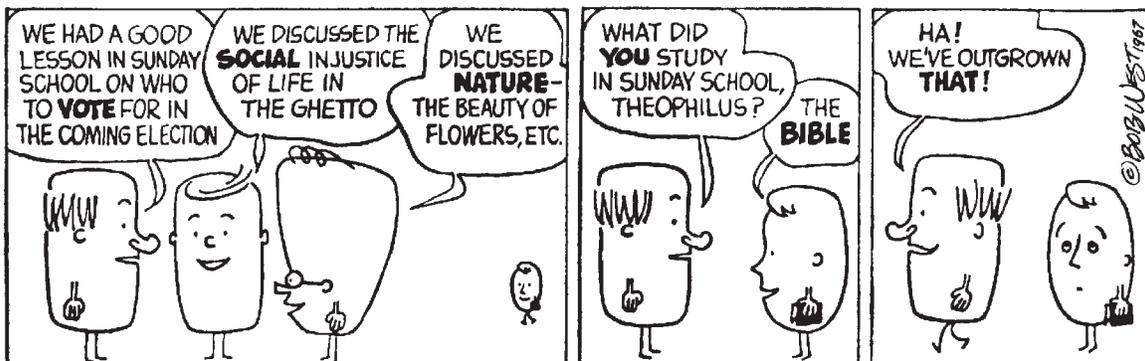
2 Thessalonians 2:13-17



13 But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 He called you to this salvation through our gospel, so that you may possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 Therefore, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold on to the traditions that we taught you, whether by speech or by letter. 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, 17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good thing you do or say.

Called By The Gospel

1. In this passage, why did Paul give thanks to God?
2. What elements are needed for our sanctification?
3. How did God *call* us? Does He still do this today?
4. What are the *traditions* we are to *stand firm* in?
5. In this passage, what has God given us?
6. How can God *encourage* our hearts?
7. How does God establish us?



2 Thessalonians 3:1-5



1 Finally, pray for us, brothers and sisters, that the Lord's message may spread quickly and be honored as in fact it was among you, 2 and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil people. For not all have faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. 4 And we are confident about you in the Lord that you are both doing—and will do—what we are commanding. 5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts toward the love of God and the endurance of Christ.



Pray For Us

1. What did Paul request of the brethren?
2. How does God's word "spread swiftly"? Please explain.
3. Who are the "perverse and evil people" in this passage?
4. What is the Lord *faithful* in?
5. How does Christ protect us from the evil one?
6. What confidence did Paul have?
7. How does the Lord direct our hearts?
8. What is the "endurance of Christ"?

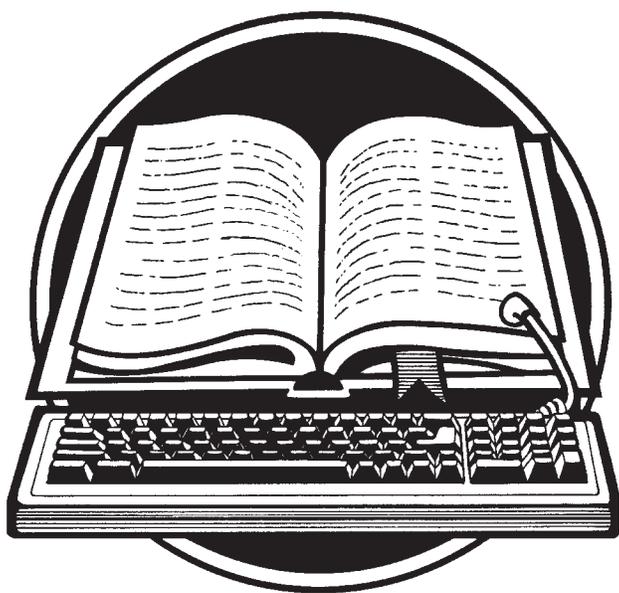
2 Thessalonians 3:6–18



6 But we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from any brother who lives an undisciplined life and not according to the tradition they received from us. 7 For you know yourselves how you must imitate us, because we did not behave without discipline among you, 8 and we did not eat anyone's food without paying. Instead, in toil and drudgery we worked night and day in order not to burden any of you. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give ourselves as an example for you to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this command: "If anyone is not willing to work, neither should he eat." 11 For we hear that some among you are living an undisciplined life, not doing their own work but meddling in the work of others. 12 Now such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and so provide their own food to eat. 13 But you, brothers and sisters, do not grow weary in doing what is right. 14 But if anyone does not obey our message through this letter, take note of him and do not associate closely with him, so that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. 16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all. 17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, which is how I write in every letter. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Withdraw Yourself

1. This passage commands us to "keep away from" certain Christians. What does this mean?
2. What does the word *undisciplined* mean?
3. What kind of example did Paul leave at Thessalonica?
4. What command did Paul leave with the saints at Thessalonica?
5. What had the *undisciplined* at Thessalonica started doing?
6. How could we "grow weary in doing right"?
7. What are we to do with those who do not "obey this message"?
8. How are we to regard those who do not "obey this message"?
9. What does the word *admonish* mean?
10. What is the significance of the phrase, "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, which is how I write in every letter"?



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