

## 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2

*1 Thess 1:1 “Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;”*

As was Paul’s custom in writing he begins by identifying who is writing the letter and then he identifies to whom the letter is written. Next, we see his salutation.

The writer of the letter is Paul, but he also mentions ***Silvanus and Timotheus***. While Paul is the main contributor to the letter, it would appear that he had input from both Silvanus and Timotheus.

I know from personal experience that when I receive a letter that the first thing I look for is name of the writer of the letter. How much attention I pay to the letter will depend on who wrote the letter. Paul first identifies himself. Paul’s history at that time would have been well known by the churches that existed during his time. They would have known that his name had been changed from Saul to Paul. Also, they would have known that as Saul of Tarsus he was the worst persecutor of the early church. They would have heard about how he had breathed out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of Christ and how he had persecuted even unto death. They would also have known of his experience on the Damascus Road and how the Lord appeared unto him and then afterwards how he had been the great defender of the faith and how himself had suffered many persecutions by the Jews because he preached the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Next, Paul mentioned Silvanus. Silvanus’ name is mentioned four times in the scriptures. The other three times are listed below:

1. 2 Cor. 1:19 *“For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.”*

2. 2 Th. 1:1 *“Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:”*

3. 1 Pet. 5:12 *“By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.”*

Silvanus is described by Peter as being a faithful brother. He is also said to be a preacher of Jesus Christ. While not a lot is said in the scriptures about Silvanus, he certainly was respected by Paul and by Peter. There are a lot of the Lord’s preachers who get little notice, but their preaching and service is nonetheless important to the church of Jesus Christ.

Then Paul mentions Timotheus. We refer to him as Timothy. In the book of Acts we see his name mentioned several times. We know that his mother was a Jew and his father was a Greek. Moreover, we know that Paul circumcised him so that he would have liberty among the

Jews to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Historically we know that he was a pastor and teacher. Furthermore Paul wrote 2 of his 3 pastoral epistles to Timothy.

To the church at Thessalonica a letter from these three men would have carried a lot of weight and been esteemed as being very important. Likewise, to us today, this epistle should be esteemed very highly as all of Paul's writings in the New Testament for we know that *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Furthermore, we find that Paul addressed the letter to ***"the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ:"*** From this we can conclude that Paul is addressing the letter to born again disciples of Jesus Christ. He has addressed it to those in Thessalonica who are ***in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ***. The preposition "in" is positional. It positions the members of the church at Thessalonica as being positioned in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul told us in Ephesians 1:4 how we got to be in Christ: *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"*

In every letter that Paul wrote to churches and to individuals, he began each epistle with the salutation of "grace and peace." Moreover, he ended each of his epistles with the closing statement of God's "grace." This was a mark of Paul's writings. He completely surrounded his writings with the mention of God's grace. Grace means the unmerited favor of God. If any work or action is required on our part then it ceases to be grace: Rom. 11:6 *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."* The following things are some of the things that are said to be by the grace of God and therefore our works or actions are not required:

1. Acts 18:27 *"And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:"* Thus, our belief is by the grace of God.
2. Rom. 3:24 *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"* Justification from sin is by the grace of God.
3. Rom. 11:5 *"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."* Election is by grace.
4. Rom. 12:6 *"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;"* The spiritual gifts we possess are by the grace of God.
5. 2 Cor. 12:9 *"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."* God's supplies in the midst of infirmities are by grace.

6. Gal. 1:15 *“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,”* God's calling is by grace.

7. Eph. 1:6 *“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”* Being made accepted in Christ is by grace.

8. Eph. 1:7 *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;”* Redemption and the forgiveness of sins is by grace.

9. Eph. 2:5 *“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;).”* The spiritual birth is by grace.

10. Eph. 3:7 *“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.”* The calling to and the gift of the ministry is by the grace of God.

11. 2 Tim. 1:9 *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”* Our salvation and calling is by the grace of God.

Like grace, peace also comes from God. As individuals we need peace with God; we need peace in the courtroom of our heart and mind and we need peace in the midst of our trials and cares of this life. Peace with God came through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on behalf of our sins so that we now have peace with God. Peace in the courtroom of our heart and mind comes through hearing and believing the gospel truth that Jesus in covenant died for our sins and redeemed us unto God. Peace in the midst of our trials and cares comes through believing the word of God and looking to the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

***“From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*** Finally, the source of our grace and peace is from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. As the word “God” suggests He has almighty power and thus has the ability to deliver us. Next as “our Father” He has the care of a perfect Father for his children. As the “Lord” He is our Master who gives us as his servants our direction and the things we need to be able to serve him in an acceptable way. As “Jesus” he has saved us from our sins. As “Christ” He is our King who reins over us and gives us our government and has dominion over us, and our High Priest who offered the perfect sacrifice unto God for us and who now makes continual intercession for us.

***“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;”*** Paul was thankful for the members of the church at Thessalonica and he included his thanksgiving to God continually in his prayers. We should show the same thankfulness to God for the disciples of Christ, especially those that we are acquainted with and mention them in our prayers.

## 1 Thessalonians 1:3-4

*1 Thess 1:3 "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; 4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God."*

In 1 Cor. 1:13 We read: *"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."* Faith, hope, and charity are the three things Paul referred to in our above text. James said: James 2:20 *"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"* James also said: James 2:18 *"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."* You cannot show faith without works. Works is the evidence of one's faith. Likewise, labor is the evidence of one's love, and patience is the evidence of one's hope.

What Paul remembered about the members of the church at Thessalonica is their works, their labor, and their patience. He equated these things to their faith, their love, and their hope.

In studying the subject of an individual's faith, we find that Christ is the author and finisher of our faith: Heb. 12:2 *"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."* It is also one of the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit: Gal. 5:22 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."* Having faith is an evidence of one's spiritual birth. We know that someone has faith when we can see the evidence of that faith. The evidence of that faith is works.

Next, we often hear people tell us that they love us. While we like to hear people tell us that, yet if there is no evidence of their love towards us we cannot be sure that they truly love us. Love is an action verb. When there is no action then it is simply reduced to an emotional feeling. Notice the following two scriptures that speak of the activity of love:

1. Eph. 5:25 *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"*

2. John 15:13: *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."*

In both of the above verses love is manifest by the actions. Christ showed his love by give himself for it. Likewise husbands are taught to manifest their love for their wives by giving themselves for their wives. Moreover, the greatest love we can manifest is to unselfishly live our lives for others.

Additionally, our hope is manifest by our patience. Our hopes rest in the promises of God. We manifest our hope by waiting on the fulfillment of those promises. When we are faced with troubles and we know the Lord has promised that he will not forsake us in our troubles, then when we patiently wait for the Lord to deliver us in the midst of those troubles we are manifesting our hope in the promises of God.

Paul said that he remembered without ceasing their work of faith, their labor of love, and their patience of hope. This teaches us that this is what we should remember about one another. Too often we remember negative are bad things about others, when often if we would consider, we would also see these good things about them. We need to remember these good things.

Paul said that he remembered these things, but he also pointed out that he was not the only one who saw these things in the members of the church at Thessalonica: ***“in the sight of God and our Father.”*** God also saw these things and takes note of these things in his children. Moreover, even if no one else remembers these things about you, God see and remembers these things about you.

Paul concluded this text with the statement: ***“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”*** Now we do not elect God, but rather God elected his people. Paul believed the members of the church at Thessalonica to be a part of the elect family of God because he saw the evidence of their election, i.e., their work of faith, their labor of love, and their patience of hope.

## **1 Thessalonians 1:5**

*1 Thess 1:5 "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."*

***“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;”*** Paul is not downplaying the importance of the word delivered in the preaching of the gospel. The word is very important. The word is the message delivered from the scriptures and it is our only rule of faith and practice. As we read in 2 Tim. 3:16, 17: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* However, the gospel comes to us not only in word, but also in power as the following verses show:

1. 1 Cor. 2:4 *“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:”*

2. Rom. 1:16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”*

Power moves things. On the day of Pentecost when Peter preached to the multitude that was gathered, many of the people were moved by the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ: Acts 2:37 *“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* Through the preaching of the gospel many of the people

were pricked in their hearts and did as Peter told them to do. Thus, they were moved by the power of the preaching of the gospel.

It has been my experience that the preaching of the gospel has often moved me. It moved me to repent and to submit to water baptism. It has often moved me to serve the Lord in many different ways and by showing me the errors of my wrongdoings has moved me to repent of those wrongdoings.

The gospel also comes in the Holy Ghost. Just as holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, so those who preach do so in demonstration of the Spirit. It has always been amazement to me how that the Holy Ghost is demonstrated in the preaching of the gospel. When a God called minister is given a message by the Spirit to preach to a congregation of people that that message is delivered it often speaks to the needs and concerns and problems of the congregation. The preacher usually does not know the needs, concerns, and problems of each member of a congregation, yet the Spirit often through the preaching of the gospel answers the needs, concerns and problems of each member of the congregation. Thus there is a demonstration of the Spirit in the preaching of the gospel.

Moreover, the preaching of the gospel also gives much assurance to those who hear it. It assures the congregation of their salvation from sin and assures the congregation of the Lord's love and concern for them both in their eternal salvation and in their timely deliverances.

*“As ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”* Paul as a preacher of the gospel was an example to the people to whom he preached. It is important that the preacher set a good example to the people to whom he preaches. If we expect the people we serve to live upright lives, then we as preachers should live upright lives. Paul and the men that were with him when he was among the congregation of the church at Thessalonica set an example for the members of that congregation.

## **1 Thessalonians 1:6-10**

*1 Thess 1:6 "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. 9 For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye 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, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."*

Previously, Paul had related how the members of the church had borne evidence of God's election and calling by their work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in Christ. Then he related how the gospel came to them in word, in power, in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance.

***“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:”*** The members of the church at Thessalonica had become followers of the ministry and of the Lord. When the ministry sets the appropriate example of being followers of Christ and they preach the word unto the congregation, then the result can be that members of the congregation become followers of the ministry and of the Lord. In 1 Cor. 11:1 Paul said, *“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”* Now if the minister of the gospel is not setting the example that he should then we should not follow that minister.

The church at Thessalonica had received the word in much afflictions. In 1 Thes. 2:14-16 we read of some of the afflictions of the church: 14 *“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: 15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: 16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”* Along with the afflictions, however, came much joy of the Holy Ghost. There are many things that can bring much joy to a child of God who hears and believes the gospel:

1. There is joy of learning of ones salvation by the grace of God through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.
2. There is joy of responding to the gospel and serving the lord in His church kingdom on earth.
3. There is the joy of knowing that the Lord is with you in the midst of your tribulations and trials.
4. There is joy in knowing that the Lord hears your prayers.
5. There is joy in knowing that you have a home in heaven and that you are joint heirs with Jesus Christ.
6. Etc., etc., etc.....

***“So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.”*** These at Thessalonica who had received the word and followed the Lord now, themselves, became examples to others who heard and believed the gospel. Notice that Paul and the other ministers heard the gospel and believed and became followers of Christ. They they set the example and preached the word to those who believed the gospel in Thessalonica and then these became followers of Christ and then became an example to other believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

***“For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.”***

There are four gifts of the gospel ministry as set forth to us in Eph. 4:11: *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;”* In the book of Acts we have recorded for us many examples of the evangelistic labors of the apostles, prophets, and evangelists. Evangelism is simply taking the gospel to those who have not heard the true gospel of the grace of Christ. Next, we ask ourselves are the pastors and teachers to be

engaged in evangelism. The answer is given to us in one of the pastoral epistles as Paul instructs Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:5 *“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”* The pastor and teacher is to do the work of an evangelist in the community of the local church in which he serves the Lord’s people. If he is not doing the work of an evangelist then the pastor is neglecting one of his duties as a pastor.

Now we ask ourselves is there a work of evangelism to which the members of the congregation are to be engaged? The answer is given us in this verse 8. For from the members of the church at Thessalonica the word of the Lord sounded out into Macedonia and Achaia and to regions beyond. Thus their faith to God-ward was spread abroad. The church at Thessalonica set an example for us today as members of the Lord’s church that it is our duty, joy, and privilege to share the gospel of the grace of Christ to others.

***“For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;”*** The evidence of the Lord’s working in the lives of the members of the church at Thessalonica was manifested by those to whom the word was sounded out unto and who witnessed the example of the church at Thessalonica who turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

***“And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”*** This verse alludes to the fact the Lord is coming again in the resurrection of the dead as He was raised from the dead and that through his death and resurrection we have been delivered from the wrath to come in the final judgment of the wicked.

## **1 Thessalonians 2:1-6**

*2 Thess 2:1 "For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: 2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. 3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: 4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. 5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: 6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ."*

In this chapter Paul reviews how the ministry and the gospel had come to the church at Thessalonica.

***“For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:”*** Paul tells the church how the coming of the ministry and the gospel had not been in vain but had born fruit.

***“But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.”*** Paul is here referring to what is recorded for us in Acts Chapter 16. Paul and Silas



had been beaten and imprisoned at Philippi for casting out an unclean spirit out of a woman and thus had destroyed the gain to her masters. After they were released they came to Thessalonica and were not deterred by the evil treatment of evil men but were bold to proclaim the gospel of the grace of Christ even though there were those who contended with them. This is certainly an example for God's ministers in all ages.

***“For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:”*** Exhortation is defined as comfort, consolation, entreaty. This should be the desire and object of those who preach the gospel to God's people. The gospel minister should not use deceit in his preaching nor be unclean physically or morally before the Lord's people. Moreover, the ministry should avoid guile (trickery) in appealing to the Lord's people. An example of using guile would be where a minister tells a story in order to appeal to the emotions of God's people. The gospel itself is more than sufficient to evoke the emotions of God's people without using other means.

***“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.”*** God chooses and calls his gospel ministers. In this calling they are placed in positions of trust with the gospel. A person put in trust should be faithful to the one who put him in the position of trust. Thus our trust should not be used to please men but to please God who placed him in that position of trust. Moreover, the gospel minister should realize that God tries our hearts and knows what our motive is.

***“For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness:”*** How different was Paul's and Silas' preaching to much of the modern religions preaching. They refused to use flattery in their preaching. This greatly contrasts with the so-called “prosperity gospel” of our age. The main emphasis there is to make people feel good about themselves and to tell the people what they want to hear. Moreover, Paul and Silas were not covetous in their preaching and teaching. They stand as a great contrast to the multi-millionaires of our day who have gained their material prosperity through preaching the so-called “prosperity gospel” and through covetousness, deceit, guile, flattery, and men-pleasing tactics have bilked many of the Lord's poor out of their life savings.

***“Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.”*** Again, Paul, Silas, the apostles, and the God called ministry of that age stand in stark contrast to the modern days preachers who seek the glory, honor, and praise of men rather than to give praise, honor, and glory to God for his grace. A true God-called ministry should follow the pattern of Paul, Silas, the apostles, and the God-called ministers of that age.

## **1 Thessalonians 2:7-10**

*1 Thess 2:7 "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: 8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. 9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any*

*of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. 10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:”*

In verses 1-6 Paul gave an example and an explanation about how not to present the gospel of Jesus Christ. In this passage Paul gives us an example of how we are to conduct ourselves as gospel ministers to the Lord’s people.

**“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:”** Being gentle is in contrast to being harsh, haughty, argumentative or destructive in our example and our preaching. A mother nursing or cherishing her children is an apt description of how a gospel minister should foster his relationship to the congregation to whom he labors and preaches.

**“So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.”** The relationship a pastor has with his congregation should include a great affection for them and a willingness to impart unto them not only the gospel of Christ, but also his own soul to them as they should be very dear unto him.

**“For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.”** Paul gave himself as an example to the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:33-35: *“I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* Where needed a gospel minister should labor both in the word and with his hands both night and day. Moreover, the gospel minister should not charge anyone for preaching the gospel. This is not to say that a congregation has no obligation to help her pastor. 1 Corinthians 9:7-14 plainly teaches us that a congregation does have an obligation: *“Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”*

**“Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:”** Like Paul, gospel ministers should strive to live holy, just, and blameless lives as an example to the congregations they serve.

## **1 Thessalonians 2:11-16**

*1 Thess 2:11 “As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, 12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. 13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. 14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: 15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: 16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”*

In verses 1-6 Paul gave an example and an explanation about how not present the gospel of Jesus Christ. In verses 7-10 Paul gave us an example of how we are to conduct ourselves as gospel ministers of the Lord’s people. In this section Paul shows us the result of setting forth a proper example and conduct in the administration of the gospel of Jesus Christ that it had on the members of the church at Thessalonica.

***“As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,”*** Here Paul sets forth for us an example of the relationship of a gospel minister’s administration of the gospel to the congregation comparing it to how a father exhorts, comforts, and charges his children.

***“That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.”*** A goal of a gospel minister in exhorting, comforting and charging the members of the congregation is that they all walk (live their lives) in a manner worthy of the fact that God has called them unto His kingdom and glory.

***“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”*** What a testimony Paul gives concerning the church at Thessalonica for they had received the word of God as the word of God and not just the word of men. How wonderful it would be if all of God’s children followed the example of the church members at Thessalonica. We seem to live in an age when people have selective hearing. They hear what they want to hear and reject the rest. Moreover, we often find people who will gladly receive certain things in the scripture but then reject other parts of the scriptures. The truth is “all scripture is given by inspiration of God” and should likewise be received as the word of God as it is in reality the word of God. Paul said he thanked God without ceasing for the manner in which the members of the church at Thessalonica had received the word of God.

Moreover, when the word of God is received as the word of God and not as just the writings or preaching of men, then it works effectually in those who receive it as such. It changes their lives.

***“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”*** Here Paul compares the persecutions of the churches at Thessalonica by their own countrymen to the persecutions and sufferings of the churches in Judaea by those Jews who both killed the Lord Jesus, their own prophets and persecuted the preachers and believers of the gospel in Judaea.

Moreover, Paul speaks of the wrath of God that had come upon the Jewish persecutors to the uttermost for their evil deeds.

## **1 Thessalonians 2:17-20**

*1 Thess 2:17 “But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. 18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and joy.”*

***“But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.”*** When a bond of Christian love is formed between people, though they may be separated from them in physical presence, yet because of this loving bond, they are still near to them in heart and they often long to see them because of this bond of love they share. I have had people that I went to school with and others that I went to college with and still others that I worked with for many years to whom I have been separated for many years and yet do not feel much of a longing to see them. In contrast, I have had brethren and sisters in Christ whom I have known in the past that I am separated from and yet have a longing to see them and they are near to my heart.

***“Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”*** We are not told how Satan hindered Paul, but I do know that Satan has put obstacles in my way when I have had a longing to go and see brethren and sisters that I have not seen for some time. Satan desires to break the bond of love and fellowship between brothers and sisters in Christ.

***“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”*** According to the scriptures, our hope rest in the promises of God. Our hope of the resurrection of our bodies, our hope of eternal live and our hope of eternal fellowship with God and the children of God all rest in God’s promise in the covenant of redemption as stated in Rom. 8:29, 30: *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”* That we will all be in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming is a reason of joy and great rejoicing while we live waiting for the hope set before us.

***“For ye are our glory and joy.”*** The word, “glory,” comes from the Greek word, “doxa” meaning dignity, honor, and praise.

### **1 Thessalonians 3:1-8**

*1 Thess 3:1 “Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; 2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: 3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. 4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. 5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. 6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: 7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: 8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.”*

***“Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;”*** We may ask ourselves, ‘why would Paul want to be left alone?’ Also, ‘why would any preacher want to be left alone?’ Sometimes, preachers need to spend time alone to pray, to read, to meditate, to study and to seek direction from the Lord for many things. Even the Lord on occasion while he walked on earth departed to be alone:

1. Matt. 14:23 “And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.”

2. John 6:15 “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.”

***“And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:”***

It is interesting to see that Paul and Peter did not pull rank in the ministry and take the position that I am an apostle but you are only a pastor. Rather they treated all of the Lord's ministers as being brothers. I know that Paul also referred at one time to Paul as being his son and he of course was not his biological son, but rather was a son in the ministry. However, now Paul spoke of Timothy as a brother in Christ. Likewise, we see Peter taking the same position as we read in 1 Peter 5:1 *"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed."* Peter placed himself on the same level with all the Lord's gospel ministers when he referred to himself as "who am also an elder." Likewise, the Lord's ministers in our day should refer to themselves as elders and brothers and not try to exalt their ministry above the ministry of others. Moreover, one brother may have been preaching for 50 or more years whereas another brother may be ordained for only a year, yet they should respect one another as fellow ministers and brothers in Christ.

Paul also referred to Timothy as a minister of God and a fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ. Paul had a deep respect for Timothy for his works' sake as no doubt Timothy did for Paul. How wonderful it would be if all of God's ministers had the same respect for one another as being ministers of God and fellow laborers in the gospel of Christ.

Paul sent Timothy to 'establish' the members of the church at Thessalonica in the faith once delivered to the saints. Having a good understanding of the faith and all of its aspects serves as a foundation for the church continuance and also in the lives of the individual members.

Another reason sent Timothy to Thessalonica was to comfort them concerning their faith. There are many things set forth in the scriptures concerning gospel comfort for God's people. A few of these are listed below:

1. Isaiah 40:1 *"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."*
2. Matt. 5:4 *"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."*
3. Luke 16:25 *"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."*
4. Rom. 1:12 *"That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."*
5. Rom. 15:4 *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*
6. 2 Cor. 1:3 *"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."*

***“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.”*** Afflictions abide the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Lord’s church kingdom on earth and her servants. A great number of afflictions are revealed to us in the book of Acts and throughout the writings of Paul. Of course, Christ himself suffered a great multitude of afflictions himself by His own countrymen. Moreover, Christ’s sufferings on the cross cannot be measured for their extent and magnitude as he suffered for our sins to redeem us from our sins. We read what Paul wrote to Timothy: 2 Tim. 3:12 *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”* We have the record of the apostles as they began to suffer persecution for preaching the gospel of Christ: Acts 5:41 *“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”* God’s faithful disciples in all ages have suffered persecution for holding to the faith once delivered to the saints.

***“For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.”*** It appears that Paul was concerned that because the brethren in Thessalonica had heard of his afflictions and persecutions that they would be discouraged and depart from the faith. If they had departed then Paul would have considered his labor among them would have been in vain.

***“But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:”*** Paul received the good news that the brethren in Thessalonica had continued in their faith and charity and that they had good remembrance of Paul and thus he was assured that his labor among them had not been in vain. I would think that all of God’s called ministers would desire to know that their labor was not in vain. How good it is when those who the ministers have labored among communicate with the one which labored among them to let them know that they are continuing in the faith and charity and have good remembrance of the one who labored among them.

***“Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.”*** Knowing that ones labor is not in vain is a comfort to a gospel minister for the gospel minister considers his life and efforts are worthwhile if the ones among whom he labors stand fast in the Lord.

### **1 Thessalonians 3:9-13**

1 Thess 3:9 *“For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; 10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith? 11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. 12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: 13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”*

***"For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;"*** Paul was again rendering thanks to God for the brothers and sisters of the church of Thessalonica. He had previously thanked God for their work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope. Now he thanks God for their joy and the joy that he had for their sakes before God. Paul seeing their joy and their fruitfulness in the gospel of Christ and the blessings of serving the Lord rejoiced with them.

***"Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?"*** Obviously Paul had a great desire to see the members of the church at Thessalonica as he prayed exceedingly to God that he might see them and to perfect that which is lacking in their faith. Growth in faith is a theme throughout the scriptures. We all need to grow in faith. Our faith continuously needs perfecting and it is through the preaching and teaching of God's word and our personal studies that we grow in faith and what we lack in the faith is perfected (matured).

***"Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you."*** Paul recognized that what he might desire to do and what he would be enabled to do was dependent upon God. For this he prayed that God would direct the way unto the members of the church at Thessalonica. A minister's steps are to be directed of the Lord. Paul and Silas had experienced the need for the direction of the Lord in the following passage: Acts 16:6 *"Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. 8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."*

***"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:"*** There is a need for the Lord's humble obedient people not only to increase in the faith, but also to increase and abound in love one toward another and toward all men. Christian growth should be a goal of every member of the Lord's church here on earth. We need to grow and increase in faith, and love, and hope throughout our journey here on earth. For this growth we need the Lord's help in helping us to grow.

***"To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."*** To establish means to steadfastly set. Unblameable means to be faultless. Thus the end goal for each of us is that our hearts may be steadfastly set to be faultless in our pursuit of holiness before God, just as all of our hearts will be steadfastly set to be faultless in holiness before God at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes with all his saints.



## **1 Thessalonians 4:1-8**

*1 Thess 4:1 “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. 2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.”*

***“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.”*** Paul both beseeches and exhorts the brethren and sisters in the church at Thessalonica. These terms are both endearing and encouraging terms to direct the brethren and sisters to a course of action. Moreover, Paul invokes the name of the Lord Jesus in beseeching and exhorting them. This shows us that it was not just Paul’s desire but also the desire of the Lord Jesus that they would follow this course of action. Next, Paul points them to the example and instruction of himself and the brethren with him in encouraging and instructing them in this course of action. Moreover, Paul tells them that to follow this course of action is pleasing to God and that they should abound more and more in this course. This teaches us that we should be more than just hearers of the word, but also doers of the word and that we should be bountiful doers of the word as the disciples of Jesus Christ.

***“For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.”*** As ministers of the gospel the instructions, exhortations, warnings, and commandments do not originate with the ministry, but are the instructions, exhortations, warnings and commandments of the Lord Jesus. However, we as ministers of the gospel should set examples of abounding in the instructions, exhortations, warnings, and commandments of the Lord Jesus to the congregations to which we labor.

***“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:”*** The word, “sanctify,” means to “set apart.” We are set apart first by God’s election of us to be his people. Then we are set apart by the sovereignty of God in causing us to be born of the Spirit. Based on those two setting aparts, we are to set ourselves apart from the world in which we live by living lives that are holy unto God. A part of this sanctification is to abstain from fornication, both natural and spiritual. God has designed that sexual intimacy is to be limited to be between the husband and his wife. Moreover, spiritual intimacy is designed to be between the child of God and God. We are not to have spiritual intimacy with false gods.

***“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:”*** The body is the vessel in which of our spirit and soul reside. Thus as born again children of God we are to mortify the deeds of the flesh and bring our bodies into subjection as Paul taught in 1 Cor. 9:27: *“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I*

*have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*” In this manner we possess our vessel (body) in sanctification and honor. The lust of concupiscence is defined as the forbidden desires of the flesh. We all have these forbidden desires present in our flesh. However, we are to mortify them and keep ourselves from acting out on those forbidden desires.

***“That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.”*** Most of us have had experiences of others defrauding us in different matters. However, as a disciple of Christ we are not to defraud others in any matter. Unfortunately I have had different ones who called themselves Christian to practice fraud on me. However, I am comforted knowing that I don’t have to avenge those who defraud me but as the following scriptures show:

1. Gal. 6:7 *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”*

2. Rom. 12:19 *“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”*

***“He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.”*** He that despiseth the Lord’s ways are despising God. They may show their displeasure in the form of persecution against man, but the root of the problem is that they despise God.

## **1 Thessalonians 4:9-12**

*1 Thess 4:9 “But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. 10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; 11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; 12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.”*

***“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.”*** We may ask ourselves when and how are we taught of God and not man to love one another? We look to the following verses of scripture to answer that question:

1. 1 John 4:16 *“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”* Here we are taught that God is love and thus the very nature of God is love.

2. 1 John 4:7 *“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”* Here we are taught that God is the very source of love and that everyone that loveth is born of God. This of course has reference to the Spiritual birth.

3. James 2:8 *“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.”* Here we are taught that love is the fulfilling of the royal law. A royal law is a law given by the King. This law was given by our King Jesus Christ.

4. Heb. 8:10 *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:”* The laws written in our heart and put in our mind are the laws of God or the royal laws, which are love to God and love to our neighbor.

5. Heb 10:16 *“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;”* See the reference above.

6. Gal. 5:22 *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”* The first of the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit is love. We love because we have been born again.

7. 1 John 3:14 *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”* Thus we know we have passed from being dead in trespasses and sins unto Spiritual life because we love the brethren.

From the above we can conclude that God wrote his laws of love in our heart in the Spiritual birth and gave us a nature that mirrors his nature of love. Thus we have a loving nature in the inner man because God gave us this nature in the inner or spiritual man that is born of God. As a result we are taught of God to love one another and do not need someone to teach us to love one another. Now this is true for those who are born of the Spirit.

***“And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;”*** Paul had previously commended the members of the church at Thessalonica for their labor of love. They were already manifesting love toward the brethren in all Macedonia. Paul then encourages them to increase their love even more and more. That should be our desire as well that we not only continue in the love that we have to others but that we increase in our loving others more and more throughout our lives.

***“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;”*** Here Paul commands the brethren to do three things: study to be quiet; do their own business; and work with their own hands.

To study to be quiet means to refrain from meddlesomeness or unnecessary speech. We should refrain from meddling in the lives of others:

1. 2 Thes. 3:11 *“For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.”*

2. 1 Tim. 5:13 *“And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.”*

To do our own business means we should engage in taking care of the things we are responsible for and to not practice unsolicited meddling in the business of others. The Lord gave us a good example of that when Peter asked the Lord what would he have John do: John 21:20 *“Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.”*

Moreover, Paul encouraged his brethren to work with their own hands. This principle is reinforced in the following verses:

1. Acts 20:33 *“I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*
2. 2 Thes. 3:10 *“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”*
3. 1 Tim. 5:8 *“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”*
4. 2 Thes. 3:11 *“For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.”*

***“That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.”*** Paul has shown the members of the church at Thessalonica that if they follow the things that he has instructed them in then they will walk honestly toward them that are without and that they will have lack of nothing, either spiritually or naturally.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

*1 Thess 5:1 “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep,*

*we should live together with him. 11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”*

**“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.”** Anytime we consider a verse of scripture it is good that we consider it in light of the context. In the end of the previous chapter Paul had wrote concerning the hope we have of the resurrection of the dead and the comfort we receive because of that hope. Thus, it would appear that the times and the seasons that Paul is referring to has to do with the coming of the Lord in the resurrection. Plainly the scriptures teach us that that day or hour in which the Lord shall come is unknown to man: Matt. 24:36 *“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”* This would have been a well known fact among the early Christians.

**“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”** A thief comes unexpectedly at night to steal. Obviously, the Lord is not coming to steal, but his coming will be completely unexpected to many.

**“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”** Here we are informed that those who are in darkness shall say, **“Peace and safety,”** then sudden destruction shall come upon them **“as travail upon a woman with child.”** Paul says they shall not escape. In 2 Thes. 1:7-10 Paul identifies for us who these people are: *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”*

While the exact day or hour knows no man when the Lord shall return in the resurrection, yet that does not mean that there won't be signs that the end is drawing near, for the scriptures do indeed give us signs of his soon return. In the above passage of scripture Paul identifies two camps. The camp in this verse is the camp of those who are not the Lord's disciples. The other camp which will be mentioned in verse 5 is the camp of the disciples. Much of what we know about the events leading up to the Lord's coming in the resurrection is given to us in Revelation chapter 20: Rev. 20:7 *“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”*

**“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”** Paul plainly identifies for us the two camps. These camps are the children of darkness and the children of the day. The disciples of the Lord make up the camp of the children of the day.

***“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”*** Paul is encouraging the children of the day (disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ) not to sleep as others do. The sleep under consideration is not physical sleep nor is it the death of the body. Rather it is sleeping (lack of activity) in our activities of discipleship and worship. When we stop reading, studying, and meditating on the word of God and we stop worshipping God in Spirit and truth, and we stop growing in faith and serving the Lord’s people, then we are asleep.

Moreover, Paul admonished the disciples to watch. I wonder how often we are not watching concerning the needs of others and our responsibilities as the Lord’s disciples. Additionally, Paul encouraged the disciples to be sober. Obviously the disciple should not be drunk with wine. However, a disciple needs also to watch that he not be drunk on his own pride. Drunkenness leads to wrong and foolish decisions and actions.

***“For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.”*** After admonishing the disciples not to sleep or be drunken, Paul tells them if they sleep or be drunken then they are doing so in the spiritual darkness of this world.

***“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”*** In contrast to the previous verse Paul encourages the disciples to be sober. When we think clearly with the light of God’s word and the leadership of the Holy Spirit we make right decisions.

Next, he tells the disciples to put on the breastplate of faith and love. As armor the breastplate is designed to protect the heart and inward organs. Faith and love serve to protect our heart and vital inner feelings from the destructions of Satan and this wicked timely world in which we live.

Additionally Paul tells the disciples to put on a helmet, the hope of salvation. A helmet is designed to protect the head where the mind is. Our hope of salvation protects our mind from many things. It protects us from false teachings, from discouragement, from terror, and from becoming despondent based on persecutions, troubles, and trials in our lives.

***“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”*** The elect children of God shall not suffer the wrath of God’s judgment because Christ died for us and whether we wake or sleep when he comes, we will live together with him.

***“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”*** Whether we comfort one another over the death of loved ones and fellow disciples or we comfort one another in the midst of trials and problems in our lives, it is good for us to be cognizant of the needs of others and to comfort them. In addition, we need to make a conscience effort to edify (build up) one another in the most precious faith.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:12-15**

*1 Thess 5:12 "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."*

Paul told Timothy and ultimately to us in 2 Tim. 3:16, 17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." From v. 12 of 1 Thes. Chapter 5 to the completion of the chapter this could be described as "instruction in righteousness."

***"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;"*** It would appear that Paul is speaking concerning the gospel ministers when he said that they "are over you in the Lord." This is not teaching that the gospel preachers are in a hierarchal position above the rest of the congregation. Peter said in 1 Peter 5:1 *"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."* Thus the ministers are not to lord it over the congregation as they are God's heritage. The labor of the ministry is to feed the flock of God and to take the oversight over the flock. They are to reprove, rebuke, exhort, lead by example and to teach, edify, and encourage the Lord's people in their Christian discipleship. In this way they are over the congregation to which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. Paul is teaching in the above that the members of the congregation to know those ministers which labor among them. This would include knowing their character, their leadership, their needs both in the ministerial work and in their family responsibilities as often because of their labors in the gospel the family may be lacking in their financial needs.

***"And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."*** The work the Lord has given his God called gospel ministers is indeed an extremely important and beneficial work and therefore our esteem for the gospel ministers should be very high for their work's sake. Our esteem for them should not be based on whether they have a dynamic personality and are very outgoing. Our esteem should not be based on whether we are related to them or are close friends with them. Our esteem for them should be based on their work's sake.

***"And be at peace among yourselves."*** The opposite of peace is conflict. Many churches have been destroyed because of conflict between members. The main reason for most conflicts is pride. To be at peace we have to work at being at peace and striving to avoid conflict wherever possible. The Lord said, "Blessed are the peacemakers..."

***"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly."*** The Greek word translated unruly is "ataktos" meaning insubordinate. A person who is unruly is insubordinate and full of pride, and

will work against the authority of others. Here that would also apply to them not accepting the authority of God's word. Paul tells the brethren to warn those that are unruly. An unruly person who will not repent of his insubordination will have to be removed from the membership of the church or the church will greatly suffer because of his or her insubordination.

***“Comfort the feebleminded.”*** There are many conditions that will render a person to be or to become feebleminded. People who are suffering from feeblemindedness often feel themselves to be insecure, inadequate, and worthless. They need the comfort and not the ridicule or avoidance of the Lord's people. They need to know that we care for them and that we are praying for them and that they are loved by the church.

***“Support the weak.”*** There are many things that can cause a person to become weak. It can be physical, financial, aging process, very adverse circumstances, etc. One thing the weak especially need is the support of the Lord's people. We who have strength or ability should be willing to support the weak. James said in James 1:27 *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”* We were without strength when the Lord's saved us from our sins: Rom. 5:6 *“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”* He did this out of His love for us. Now we should follow his example and support the weak.

***“Be patient toward all men.”*** Again the Lord has set the example for us in that he has been patient with all of his children. Now we are to follow his example and be patient towards all.

***“See that none render evil for evil unto any man.”*** This goes completely against our flesh nature. If someone does something against me, my first inclination is to retaliate. However, this is not what the scriptures teach should be our reaction. It is not our place to seek vengeance:

1. Rom. 12:19 *“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”* If vengeance is needed, the Lord will handle it so we don't have to avenge ourselves of evil.

2. The Lord gave us this in Matt. 5:43 *“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*

***“But ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.”*** This is teaching that all of us need to take to heart. Following evil only leads to evil. Following evil men will result in evil action on our part. Our companions and friends should be good people and we should seek to follow good both among ourselves and all that we see doing good.



## **1 Thessalonians 5:16-22**

*:16 "Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 19 Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil."*

As disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ we should possess and develop the characteristics and qualities as listed in the passage above.

***"Rejoice evermore."*** We have so much to rejoice in. We can rejoice in the grace of God that he chose us before the foundation of the world. We can rejoice in the grace of God in that he quickened us into spiritual life. We can rejoice in the grace of God in that he saved us from the condemnation of sin at the cross of Calvary. We can rejoice in our hope of heaven's glory world based on the promise of God made before the foundation of the world. We can rejoice in the spiritual gifts that he has given each of us. We can rejoice in the scriptures that God has given in which we find comfort, peace, direction, timely deliverances, etc. We can rejoice in that we have an intercessor who ever liveth and maketh intercession for us. We can rejoice in that we have a throne of grace by which we can approach God in prayer and find grace to help in time of need. The list continues on and on. Thus we should rejoice evermore.

***"Pray without ceasing."*** Obviously we cannot pray 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days in a year. However, we should make at least a daily practice of praying and not cease from that schedule of praying.

***"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*** Just as we have so much to rejoice in as noted above, we also have so much to be thankful for. We are so quick to ask God for our needs, yet so lax in giving thanks to God for all his blessings and deliverances. It is pleasing to God for us to give thanks to Him. Just as parents like their children to thank them for the things they do for them, God likes for his children to give him thanks.

***"Quench not the Spirit."*** God's children have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. When they fail to respond to the leading of the Spirit, then they are quenching the Spirit. Sometimes we may feel a need to go visit a brother or sister in the nursing home and yet don't follow through then we are quenching the Spirit. We sometimes feel a burden to assist a brother or a sister, but if we don't follow up then we are quenching the Spirit. Likewise, sometimes brothers and sisters know that they should regularly attend to the worship service, but allow other things to get in the way. This too is quenching the Spirit. Other times we feel an inner desire to study God's word, and yet allow other things to keep us from doing so. Again, this is quenching the Spirit.

***"Despise not prophesyings."*** Rev. 19:10 tells us that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy: Rev. 19:10 "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." When the scripture testimony or some good brother or sister tells us what we should be doing or not be doing based on the word of God, then we should not despise that prophesying.

***“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”*** What is the standard by which we are to prove all things? The standard is the word of God. We are not to prove things by trying them out to see whether it is good or not. We are to use the perfect standard, which is the word of God in order to prove what is good and what is not good. Once we have approved something to be good, then we should hold fast to that which is good.

***“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”*** This verse needs no expounding upon. It means that we are not even to give an appearance of evil as the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:23-28**

*I Thes. 5:23 “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. 25 Brethren, pray for us. 26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss. 27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

***“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** God is the God of peace. It is He who brought peace between his elect and Him through the sacrificial atonement of Jesus Christ. Moreover, it is through the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the gifts that God has given that we have the gospel of peace that brings peace in our hearts. Additionally we can have peace with one another by following the teachings of God’s words.

It is also God who sanctified or set us apart in election, in the spiritual birth, in the atoning blood of Christ for his elect and we are to set ourselves apart through obedience to the word of God.

The elect born-again person is a three-fold creature. He consists of body, soul, and spirit. For this Paul prayed that God’s elect among the members of the church at Thessalonica be preserved blameless. After the new or spiritual birth we know that the soul and spirit of the elect cannot sin, but the flesh still is possessed of a sinful nature. When we walk after the inner man then we are blameless before our God. When we walk in the flesh, we bring a reproach upon ourselves. However, in the resurrection we are assured that our soul, spirit, and body will be presented blameless before God and will never sin again.

***“Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”*** It is God who called us in the miraculous working of the new or spiritual birth. It is also God who will present us perfect in the resurrection of the dead. God is faithful to do what he has promised to do.

***“Brethren, pray for us.”*** Paul asked the brethren at Thessalonica to pray for the gospel ministers. The gospel ministers are often at the forefront of the battle and are faced with many hardships and trials as a result of being our front in fighting the good fight of faith. We should ever be mindful to pray for the gospel ministers.

***“Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.”*** Often we are asked what is a holy kiss? Since the word holy appears it must be a separate kiss as that is what the word holy means. Thus, it is not a romantic kiss but a glad uniting of brothers and sisters when they meet. It can in my opinion take many forms. Often it is a loving embrace, or a warm handshake or even a kiss upon the cheek. It signifies a gladness to be once again in one another’s company to worship and serve the Lord.

***“I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.”*** I have read that in that time, there would have been very few copies of the scriptures available for the brothers and sisters to read. Just as the Old Testament was customarily read in the synagogues by the Jews on their meeting days, so Paul desired that the word of God be read aloud to the church. Another thing this teaches us is that Paul believed that what he had written to the Church at Thessalonica was the revealed truth revealed to Him by the Holy Spirit.

***“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”*** Paul opened and closed his epistles with the mention of God's grace. He surrounded his writings with the mention of God's grace. Grace is the grand subject of what he wrote.