



authentic **CHURCH**

READING THROUGH FIRST THESSALONIANS

DAILY READING GUIDE

WHAT IS THIS?

Welcome to the Grace City Church Daily Reading Guide. These are made for you, to help you get stuck into the Bible each weekday. It follows along with the series we're doing at church and in our Community Groups, so you get three chances to understand and apply God's word to your life. We hope it will find a place with your Bible and be opened often!

HOW DO I USE IT?

Find a time and place each weekday where you can spend 15 minutes or more with your Bible, a pen and this guide. Pray that God would speak to you through His word, by His Spirit. Read the passage provided. Then use the questions provided as a way to get you thinking. You might like to write down your thoughts and questions.

ABOUT THE BIBLE

At Grace City, we believe that the way God reveals himself to us is through His word, the Bible. The Bible is God's revelation to us. The words of the Bible are divinely inspired and infallible, as originally given, and have supreme authority in all matters of faith, conduct and experience. The Bible is sufficient for knowing God. It is not only central to the wellbeing of the church but is able to thoroughly equip the Christian community for life and godliness.



Look out for the 'habit-moments' every Wednesday. These are questions to help you transition from reading the Bible sporadically to consistently.

1 THESSALONIANS

Paul likely wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth a few months after he had planted the church there (around 50 A.D.). This makes it one of the earliest writings of the new Testament.

Paul went on two missionary journeys and on the second one, he came to Thessalonica. 'As was his custom', Paul first went to the Jewish synagogue, preaching the gospel for three Sabbaths (Acts 17:2). As a result of Paul, Silas and Timothy's mission work in Thessalonica, a great number of the Thessalonian people came to believe the gospel and a new church was planted (see Acts 17:4 & 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10; 2:13). Violent opposition arose as a result of this movement and the persecution that broke out forced Paul and his companions to leave the still young Thessalonian church. Paul worried for Thessalonians, unsure as to whether they were still standing firm in the faith (1 Thessalonians 3:5). Whilst he longed to see them, it was not made possible for him to return to them (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18), and so he sent Timothy to them, in order that he may find out how they were going and to strengthen and encourage them in their faith (1 Thessalonians 3:2-3). 1 Thessalonians was written on Timothy's return to Paul with the good news that the Thessalonians were standing firm in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 3:6-8). Paul was overjoyed and wrote to encourage them to continue on in the faith.

Despite the church's infancy it was in many ways a model to other churches throughout Greece (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8). Their turning to Christ had been genuine (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10) and they were growing daily in faith, hope and love (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Whilst Paul was greatly encouraged by how the church was doing, being young in the faith it was a church that still had much to learn (1 Thessalonians 3:10), and so Paul wrote to them regarding questions they had and certain aspects he felt needed further instruction.

He also sought to spur them on, encouraging them to continue more and more in what they were doing well. 1 Thessalonians 4:1 is a crucial verse in the development of the letter. For the first three chapters Paul has been speaking to the Thessalonians about the way in which they received the gospel, about his ministry among them, about his concern

that they might not be standing firm in the faith, and about his great joy at Timothy's report that they are indeed standing firm. In 1 Thessalonians 4:1 he says 'Finally brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.' They are a church that is going well, that is growing in holiness, that is maturing in spite of persecution. But here Paul encourages them to do this 'more and more'. In essence, 1 Thessalonians is like a pat on the back that affirms how they have been living in order to please God and encourages them to keep pressing on to do this more and more.

1 Thessalonians addresses some big themes. Paul speaks of the power of the Word of God (seen in its effect on the Thessalonians), teaches how to do gospel ministry (as Paul defends his ministry), shows how to pastor people (seen in Paul's intense concern for the Thessalonians), how to cope with suffering (seen in the Thessalonians' response to persecution), how to live in order to please God, what will happen when the Lord returns, and how we should live in light of that day. Ultimately, Paul seeks to remind the Thessalonians that following Jesus provides a counter-cultural holy way of life, one that responds to hostility with love and generosity, and that is motivated by hope in the coming kingdom of Jesus. Paul wants them to be utterly transformed through life in Christ, spreading and living the message as they labour in faith and love, practically serving those around them. True faith influences one's heart and life so that we obey God and serve others. The Thessalonians were, in some ways, the church we want to be. They might not have had any more people in their church than we do, in fact, they might have even had less! But their gospel footprint was huge. This is how Paul describes them: 'You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia —your faith in God has become known everywhere' (1 Thessalonians 1:6-8). What characterised this church full of new Christians? What made them stand out as an example to the believers in Macedonia and Achaia? And most importantly – how can we imitate them here at Grace City?

STRUCTURE

At a simple level, Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians can be broken down according to this structure:

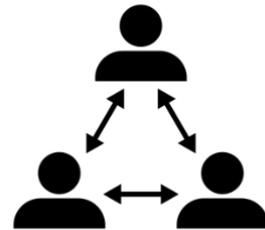
Chapter 1

Thanks



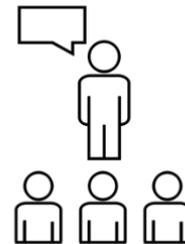
Chapters 2-3

The relationship between Paul, Silvanus and Timothy and the Thessalonians



Chapters 4-5

Specific instructions



WEEK 1 MONDAY

Acts 17:1-10

1. We can gain helpful background to 1 Thessalonians by the recount of the gospel coming to the city in Acts. While some accepted the message, what happened afterward in Thessalonica?
2. How does this provide helpful background to 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 2:14 and 2:18?
3. While our experience in Sydney is nowhere near as difficult, we are witnessing a small increase in hostility to Christians in recent years. How is what happened in Thessalonica similar to and different from Sydney?

Don't forget to flick forward a few pages for 'weekly reflections', which will provide extra depth to your answers from this page.



Pray that, when affliction and suffering and hostility come because of our association with Jesus, we will stay with Jesus. Ask for courage and boldness in a city that increasingly reacts with hostility to Christian faith.

ALTERNATIVE Read Acts 17:1-10 and divide it into 3 or 4 sub-sections. Give each sub-section a title.

TUESDAY

1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

1. Fill in the blanks.

What do these things lead to (Note: NIV or ESV translation is most helpful for this)?

Faith →

Love →

Hope →

2. Do you find it odd that Paul gives thanks to God for the work, labour and endurance that the Thessalonians are producing?

3. When you see a Christian working, labouring and enduring, do you normally praise them or God? What would be the ideal response?

ALTERNATIVE Write down at least 3 questions about this section of the Bible and ask them to a Christian friend.



Thank God for evidences of his transformation in the lives of those around you. Those in your community group, or Christians you see often at church, are a great place to start.

WEDNESDAY



On Wednesdays, concentrate on your routines. Ask God to help you establish a consistent time with Him.

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

1. How does Paul describe the Thessalonians in v4?

2. Perhaps the most famous verse in the Bible in John 3:16? How would you describe the difference in God's love towards 'the world' (John 3:16) and 'the chosen' (1 Thess 1:4)?

3. If you are a Christian, you are loved in both ways. You are doubly loved. Enjoy that fact today.

ALTERNATIVE If this section was missing from the Bible, what would we not know? How are we richer as a result of this treasure?



Thank God that he doesn't just love you broadly, but that, if you are a chosen follower of Jesus, he has demonstrated his love for you not just by sending Jesus (which is extravagant itself) but also by choosing you specifically.

THURSDAY

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

1. Who did the Thessalonians become imitators of and who came to imitate the Thessalonians?

2. What specifically about the Thessalonians was worth imitating? How similar or different has your experience been?

3. In v7 it appears that the Thessalonians themselves, although initially imitators, became imitated. What pattern for us today is established in this?

4. Who do you imitate and why do you imitate them? What needs to happen in your own life before you become someone worth imitating?

ALTERNATIVE
Put verses 6 and 7 into your own words.



God, make me someone worth imitating. Please forgive my sin and help me to leave it behind. Make me like the Thessalonians.

FRIDAY

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

1. The Thessalonians turned away from one thing and towards two things. Fill in the blanks:

They turned from _____
to _____
and to _____.

2. If all we had were vv9-10, how would you define conversion?

3. Like the Thessalonians, we are also waiting. Read Jude vv20-21 (there is only one chapter in Jude) for further instructions on what to do while waiting for Jesus' return.

ALTERNATIVE
Read the WEEKLY REFLECTIONS section for this week.



Ask for holiness. Repent of sin that you can see in the past week. Thank God for Jesus and the forgiveness available. Also pray that you would have the joy of seeing someone come to faith, like the Thessalonians did, in the second half of this year.

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

MONDAY

After the gospel received its partial acceptance, Paul and Silas experienced strong opposition. This helps us understand one potential reason why Paul would write in 1 Thessalonians about the sufferings that the Thessalonians are experiencing and why Paul and Silas were unable to return. In Sydney we also see a split response between belief and opposition. We also see that people who associated with Christians (like Jason in Acts) can suffer associated opposition. That being said, we can give thanks that the persecution in our city is not yet at the stage of Acts 17.

TUESDAY

Faith → Work

Love → Labour

Hope → Endurance

It may feel odd that Paul is thanking God, because it is actually the Thessalonians that are doing these things. Paul is right, however, to thank God first and foremost because God is the one who loved them, chose them and turned them into believers who did these things. God is the source and so God is to be thanked. In our lives, when we see Christians working, labouring and persevering, it is best for our primary praise to go to God, although there may still be some words of encouragement you can offer to the Christian herself.

WEDNESDAY

Paul describes them as brothers and sisters loved by God. This is interesting because in John 3:16 it seems that God loves the world broadly, but here in 1 Thess 1:4 the focus is on God's love for a particular group (the chosen). It seems that, even though God loves the whole world and showed it by sending His Son, there is another sense in which God also shows his love by choosing some. For those who are chosen, we can rejoice that God has poured His love on us in both ways: Jesus' death and our election. If you are a Christian, you are

doubly loved. This naturally raises questions about those who are not Christians; that is a profitable area for further thought, but is not the focus of 1 Thessalonians.

THURSDAY

The Thessalonians became imitators of us (Paul and his companions) and of the Lord. The believers in Macedonia and Achaia then began to imitate the Thessalonians. The characteristic worth imitating was their welcoming of the message in the midst of severe suffering with joy given by the Holy Spirit. This gives a helpful point for our own reflection: would I still welcome the message (the gospel) if I had to suffer for it? The pattern established is that a follower of Jesus is to both imitate those ahead of them in the faith, but also to strive to be worthy of imitation by those newer or younger in the faith. It is normal for a Christian to 'be mentored' and eventually to be a 'mentor'. In selecting who we imitate we do well to look at their character and convictions over their competence. To become someone worth imitating, you may need to identify and work on an area of your life; e.g. your relationships, your private financial giving, your Bible and prayer life, your sharing of the gospel or many other areas. Let us aspire to be mentor-material, while continuing to realise that Jesus is the only perfect mentor.

FRIDAY

They turned from idols to serve and to wait. Conversion has three elements: turning away from the old with the outcome of serving and waiting. Jude prioritises our godliness and holiness as we wait.

SUNDAY'S SERMON NOTES

WEEK 2 MONDAY

1 Thessalonians 2:1-2

1. What specifically does Paul know (v1) and what specifically did Paul do (v2)?

2. What is the link between the first and second verse? Does one explain the other, is there a contrast, or is one the grounds of the other?

3. In what arenas of your life would you face opposition for telling the gospel?

ALTERNATIVE Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2 and divide it into 3 or 4 sub-sections. Give each sub-section a title.



Remembering that boldness comes from God, ask God for boldness in proclaiming the gospel even in hard places. You may even ask God to give you an opportunity today.

TUESDAY

1 Thessalonians 2:2-6

1. How many improper motives does Paul list?
2. V3 starts with the word 'for'. What is the link between v2 and v3?
3. These improper motives as listed specifically with reference to sharing the gospel, not only as general character traits. Which improper motive from the list could you personally be in danger of?

ALTERNATIVE Write down at least 3 questions about this section of the Bible and ask them to a Christian friend.



Repent of improper motives in yourself. Ask that we would be a church that ministers with integrity.

WEDNESDAY



Do you want a Bible-reading habit? Community is key to habit formation. Who could you share your insights and questions with?

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

1. List all the words that indicate closeness of relationship between Paul and the Thessalonians.
2. These verses start with 'instead' (NIV translation) or 'but' (ESV translation). What does this linking word show us?
3. These words have specific application for those who work in churches or ostentatiously Christian settings. What application could there be for the majority of Christians who do not?

ALTERNATIVE If this section was missing from the Bible, what would we not know? How are we richer as a result of this treasure?



Ask that God would make you and us more like vv7-8 and less like verses 3-6.

THURSDAY

1 Thessalonians 2:9-12

1. How does Acts 18:1-4 help us understand 1 Thessalonians 2:9?

2. If Paul worked whilst doing Gospel ministry, what does this mean for those who work for churches? What does this mean for those of us that also work in secular jobs?

3. If the gospel is that we are not worthy of God, what place does 2:12 have? Looking very closely at v12, why does Paul encourage them to live lives worthy of God?

4. This week, who are you going to...
Encourage?
Comfort?
Urge on?



Praise God for saving us even though we are not worthy. Ask him to increasingly change us, so that we would live lives worthy of Him. Pray for someone who may need encouragement, comfort or urging on.

ALTERNATIVE
Write an encouraging/comforting/urging text to a Christian friend and send it.

FRIDAY

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1. An exercise in close Bible reading: There are many themes and ideas in these verses, but what is Paul's primary concern? What one big point is he trying to convey?

2. Pick one way in which you would like to emulate Paul and his work among the Thessalonians.

ALTERNATIVE

Read the WEEKLY REFLECTIONS section for this week.



Ask God to help you emulate Paul in whatever way you chose from question 2.

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

MONDAY

Paul knows that his visit to Thessalonica was not without results (v1) and Paul spoke the gospel despite persecution (v2). The second verse explains the first by contrasting with the first: v1 is in the negative (not without results) and v2 is in the positive (we dared...). It is also possible that v2 is the basis of v1; the visit had results because of bold gospel declaration. You may face opposition to faith in your workplace, extended family, sports team, university, TAFE and also online. But we can be encouraged by Paul's bold proclamation of the gospel in the face of persecution.

TUESDAY

Paul lists error, impure motives, trickery, people-pleasing, flattery, greed and the pursuit of praise from people in his catalogue of potential improper motives to gospel declaration. The word 'for' shows us that v3 explains v2. Specifically, Paul could speak the gospel in face of opposition because his appeal was earnest and genuine and not motivated by anything from this list. Great motives are behind great gospel declaration. Where are you personally in danger?

WEDNESDAY

'Nursing mother', 'care', 'love' and 'delight' all indicate closeness of relationship. The linking word establishes a contrast between vv2-6 (improper motives) and vv7-8 (proper motives). While those who work in churches or similar environments can take Paul as a model of relating to the flock, we as the majority who do not can use this passage to help us be on our guard for false teacher and also as an encouragement to close relationships between all members of the church.

THURSDAY

In Acts 18:1-4 we learn that Paul worked part time as a tent-maker, but that gospel proclamation was first and foremost (v4). Now we can better understand what Paul meant in 1 Thessalonians 2:9. While bi-vocational pastoral work is one legitimate option, it represents one among a number of pastoral models and cannot be taken to limit the variety of possibilities. That being said, it is clear that those who work in churches ought never be lazy. Rather, they should work hard. Conversely, a secular job ought not automatically stop us from seeking every opportunity to promote God's kingdom. Although we are saved entirely by grace and are not worthy of God in our natural selves, works and a changed life naturally flow from this free salvation. Look very closely at the last part of the verse; God calls us into his kingdom and as we move in that direction it only makes sense for us to be increasingly shaped by our destination.

FRIDAY

This section is primarily about Paul's initial work of bringing the gospel to Thessalonica. He wants the readers to remember his way of life (that it was not characterised by this catalogue of impure motives). They are witnesses of how blameless he was. This all fits into Paul's bigger point in chapters 2 and 3; that he has a deep affection for them, but was not able to visit, and so sent Timothy instead. From your reading this week, you may be able to find one particular verse that stands out to you. Maybe it is Paul's boldness (v2), the closeness of relationship (vv7-8) or the call to holiness (v12). What is it for you?

SUNDAY'S SERMON NOTES

WEEK 3 MONDAY

1 Thessalonians 2:13-14

1. What is the difference between accepting the gospel as human words and God's word?

2. According to v14 what does the Thessalonians willingness to suffer indicate?

3. Following on from Q2, what are ways we may similarly suffer today that reveal our willingness to suffer for the word of God? Can you swap your name with their names?

ALTERNATIVE Read 1
Thessalonians 2:13-20 and divide it into 3 or 4 sub-sections. Give each sub-section a title.



Pray for strength to be able to withstand suffering, however that may look in the 21st century.

TUESDAY

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

1. Why has the 'wrath of God come' on the Jews mentioned in vv15-16?
2. Looking closely at vv14-16, what is the wrath of God?
3. How do you think we should respond to the fact that God has wrath against those who 'displease God and are hostile to everyone'?

ALTERNATIVE Write down at least 3 questions about this section of the Bible and ask them to a Christian friend.



Take a moment and think of Jesus and the cross. Thank God for His Son and the sacrifice he made for your sins, so that you would never face wrath.

WHAT DOES 2:16 MEAN?

What does Paul mean when he speaks about wrath coming on the Jews? This is one of the more confusing verses in 1 Thessalonians. Notice the following:

1. Paul elsewhere writes about his earnest desire for the good of his fellow Jews (see Romans chapters 9 and 10). Although he is experiencing opposition from this particular group, Paul cannot be characterised as simply anti-Semitic.
2. Some commentators believe that 2:16 refers to an event that has already occurred. A number of events occurred between AD45 and 49 which could fit this description, such as a famine, a brutal massacre and expulsion of Jews from Rome.
3. Other commentators believe that Paul is speaking with a sense of the future. Remembering that 1 Thessalonians was written around AD50, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 would therefore be the natural fulfilment of these words.

John Stott, in his commentary on 1 Thessalonians, helpfully summarises: 'However we interpret the last two sentences of v16, they are extremely solemn words. Yet anti-Semitism cannot find any possible justification in them.'

WEDNESDAY



Charles Duhigg says: 'Change might not be fast and it isn't always easy. But with time and effort, almost any habit can be reshaped.'

1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

1. How would you describe Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians based on these 3 verses?
2. What do you think he means in vv19-20 when he calls them his 'crown'?
3. How could you apply Paul's clear love and care for his disciples in your own life and relationships? What does the way he speaks to them from Q1 teach you about his way of teaching people how to live as followers of Christ?

ALTERNATIVE If this section was missing from the Bible, what would we not know? How are we richer as a result of this treasure?



Ask God to give you the strength to love and commit to other people's faith and salvation as deeply as Paul did.

THURSDAY

1 Thessalonians 3:1-3

1. What does Paul expect the Thessalonians to be certain of? (Hint: v3)

2. How did Paul's certainty in Q1 inform his actions in vv1-3?

3. V3 shows that we should anticipate trials and afflictions. How should this knowledge inform your daily choices?

ALTERNATIVE Put 1
Thessalonians 3:1-3 into your own words.



Ask God to give you perseverance and deep roots in belief, even when afflictions come.

FRIDAY

1 Thessalonians 3:4-5

1. What did Paul warn the Thessalonians would happen?

2. What is Paul inferring could have happened if 'the tempter had tempted you' (v5)?

3. In your Christian walk, what should Paul's fear in v5 alert you to?

ALTERNATIVE
Read the WEEKLY
REFLECTIONS section for this
week.



Thank God that the battle is won and that Satan no longer has a hold on anyone who puts their faith in Christ.

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

MONDAY

The Word of God is at work in believers (v14). The Thessalonians' suffering (v14) indicates that the Word of God is at work in them (v13). Pay close attention to the word 'for' at the beginning of v14 as it indicates the relationship between v13 and v14. In Australia, some of the common issues that may arise daily pertain to the topics of gender and sexuality. Because we accept God's word as the unchanging eternal truth, we subsequently do not subscribe to today's ever-changing principles.

TUESDAY

These specific Jews are the ones 'who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone.'

The wrath of God is the outpouring of God's anger on those who 'displease Him.' It is the reason Jesus had to die for us. As Christians, one of the responses is that we be overflowing with thanksgiving. Because of what Jesus did on the cross and although we do fit into the category of those whom 'displease God', we still don't have to pay that price. What a gift we have been given!

WEDNESDAY

He speaks to them as if they are a family that were forced to separate. He clearly cares for them deeply and loves them profoundly. Paul views the conversion and faithfulness of the Thessalonians as his 'glory and joy.' He says that he will be wearing this glory and joy as a crown in Jesus' presence.

As we read Paul's words, his profound love for them is clear (v17) and we can see that in his opinion, their relationship is of eternal importance (v20). This should give us insight in how we think about people we share the gospel with and how deeply we should be connected with them.

THURSDAY

According to v3, Paul says that they are destined for trials. Due to his foreknowledge that trials and afflictions will come, he sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage them in their faith so that no one would be unsettled by their difficulties (vv2-3). As we saw in Q2, Timothy was sent to encourage and strengthen their faith. We can also learn from what Paul did and live out this truth. When you are aware that difficult times can always come on anyone, you are always on the ready to encourage and support your brothers and sisters. Likewise, they are ready to support you.

FRIDAY

Paul warned the Thessalonians that trials and afflictions were coming and they would be persecuted. Paul was afraid that the Thessalonians had fallen back into their old ways due to Satan's temptations and that all the work invested in them would have been in vain. Paul's words tell us that he was afraid that all the work he had done with the Thessalonians had been in vain and that the tempter (Satan) had interfered with his work (v5). This tells us that we need to be alert ourselves that persecution can lead us to fall away and therefore take actions against that (e.g. pray against it, encourage others with this verse who look like they are following that pattern).

SUNDAY'S SERMON NOTES

WEEK 4 MONDAY

1 THESSALONIANS 3:1-7

1. What are the three things that caused Paul's joy in v6?

2. Following on from Q1, fill in the blanks with these three words: 'Paul', 'others', 'God'.

- (1) 'your faith' = a right attitude towards ...
- (2) 'your...love' = a right attitude towards ...
- (3) 'you long to see us' = a right attitude towards...

3. How can you use the three things above to test your heart?

ALTERNATIVE

Read through 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13 and divide it 3 or 4 sub-sections. Give each sub-section a title.



Ask God to change the desires of your heart into desires that glorify Him.

TUESDAY

1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-7

1. Why was the report of the Thessalonian's faith especially encouraging to Paul (v7)?

2. From vv6-7, what can we learn about how God encourages believers in difficult times?

3. We see that the main reason Paul is encouraged is because of the Thessalonians' faith (v7). Thinking honestly and critically, what are the things that your heart is encouraged by?

ALTERNATIVE

Write down at least 3 questions about this section of the Bible and ask them to a Christian friend.



Take a moment to think deeper into question 3 and ask God to make a change in you.

WEDNESDAY



What is your biggest barrier to forming a Bible-reading habit? What is one small step you could take to overcome it?

1 THESSALONIANS 3:8-10

1. Looking at v8, why is Paul thankful in v9?
2. Something is lacking in their faith (v10). What is it? Take a peek forward at chapters 4 and 5.
3. Paul navigates a way between two extremes. On the one hand, he gives thanks for the Thessalonians and derives much joy from them. On the other hand, he openly acknowledges that some parts of their faith are lacking. Do you naturally lean towards the first, but neglect the second? Or do you naturally lean towards the second, but neglecting the first?



Ask God to, over the coming weeks, show you where your own faith is lacking.

ALTERNATIVE

If this section was missing from the Bible, what would we not know? How are we richer as a result of this treasure?

WHAT IS LACKING?

1 Thessalonians 3:10 indicates that something is lacking in their faith. Paul wishes to visit them again so that he can supply this missing element. What is this missing thing?

The word translated 'supply' in both the NIV and ESV can have at least two meanings. Firstly, it is used in Matthew 4:21 and Mark 1:19 to indicate 'restore' or 'put in order'. Secondly, it is used in Luke 6:40 and Ephesians 4:12 with an educational sense. Outside of the Bible, this same word is used of the training that Alexander the Great received from Aristotle. It likely that the second meaning is what Paul had in mind here. Therefore, the sense is that Paul wishes to see the Thessalonians so that he may educate them, or put their thinking in order. The particular issues in which Paul thinks they are lacking are likely those addressed in chapters 4 and 5 of this letter. By way of application, we can study chapters 4 and 5 to see if our own thinking is also out of order. We sit at Paul's feet, through reading this letter, and attempt to identify what is lacking in our own faith.

THURSDAY

1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-13

1. What are the things that Paul prays to God for in vv11-12?
2. The ESV translation begins v13 with 'so that'. What link is Paul making between v12 and v13?
3. How does the answer to Q1 inform our prayers for others around us?

ALTERNATIVE
Read the WHAT IS LACKING section.



Pray that God may give you the discipline to frequently pray for those around you.

FRIDAY

1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-13

1. Read Ephesians 1:4 and 5:27. What does Paul mean when he uses the term 'blameless and holy' or 'blameless in holiness' in 3:13?

2. Following on from Q1, why is it important for us to be 'blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes...' (hint: Eph 1:4)?

3. Using the two verses from Ephesians, who is most involved in the process of becoming more holy? You or God?

ALTERNATIVE Read through the WEEKLY REFLECTIONS section for this week.



Take a moment and think of Jesus and the cross. Thank God for His son and the sacrifice he made for your sins.

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

MONDAY

Paul's joy stems from the Thessalonians' faith, love and their longing to see Paul.

- (1) 'your faith' = a right attitude towards God.
- (2) 'your...love' = a right attitude towards others.
- (3) 'you long to see us' = a right attitude towards Paul.

To introspectively test your heart's desires based on your faith, love and longing for Christian fellowship is a healthy habit to take up.

TUESDAY

Paul was going through a time of distress and persecution and was encouraged 'because of your faith.' It's great to see how God uses believers to encourage and strengthen each other through seeing God's work in their lives. In difficult times, it's especially encouraging when you hear good news about someone that you shared the gospel with. Unfortunately, many times we are 'encouraged' by earthly things instead of heavenly things. We are comforted by more money in the bank, a rise/dip in the housing market, or a flourishing relationship instead of hearing that God is at work in someone else's life.

WEDNESDAY

Paul is thankful because the Thessalonians are standing fast/firm in the Lord (v8). What is lacking in their faith is most probably a reference to the issues that Paul addressed in chapters 4 and 5. They are standing firm but are by no means perfect followers of Jesus. By way of application, we can emulate Paul in the way that he navigated between these two extremes. He was able to be both joyful and thankful, but also realistic about the shortcomings of the believers in Thessalonica.

THURSDAY

Paul asks that God may clear the way to visit the Thessalonians, make their love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else. 'So that' indicate that v12 leads to v13. Specifically, love causes a strengthening of heart and is part of the ecosystem in which Christians become more blameless and holy. Love is not only an end in itself, it also has positive effects for other elements of Christian living. These verses should help inform our prayers for those around us. We can intentionally pray about our experience of Christian fellowship ('us to come to you', v11) and for church unity ('your love increase... for each other and everyone else', v12).

FRIDAY

According to the verses in Ephesians, holy and blameless means to be 'radiant... without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish'. Ephesians 1:4 tells us that God 'chose us in him... to be holy and blameless in His sight' which gives us the most important reason to do anything; it's God's will. Inversely, if we aren't holy and blameless, that means we are against God's will which is not somewhere we want to be. God is the one who makes us holy and blameless. Eph 1:4 'He chose us in Him... to be holy and blameless'. Eph 5:27 'to present her to himself as... holy and blameless'. 1 Thess 3:13 'May He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy...'. So the great news is that God is the only one who has the power to present us as holy and we are reliant on His grace and what Christ did on the cross. As we repent and accept Christ's free gift, His sacrifice, we are then covered by His blood and presented to the Father as blameless and holy.



Grace City prayerfully and financially supports Living Water Church in Redfern, which works particularly with the large population of indigenous Australians in that urban area. Here are particular areas for prayer, as shared by the church in July 2018.

THANK GOD

Give thanks to God for the families who are regular at church.

Give thanks to God for the growth of the youth group.

Give thanks to God for churches who support Living Water Church by providing meals and helpers.

ASK GOD

Ask God for Godly conflict resolution in the community.

Ask God for men to come to church.

Ask God for fresh evangelistic contacts.

Ask God for Matt, the lead pastor, and his family to be refreshed by their short period of leave in July.

Gene L. Green and Jeffrey A.D. Weima's commentaries on 1 Thessalonians were particularly helpful in understanding 1 Thessalonians 3:10.

Basic translation used is the New International Version 2011.

Icons used from thenounproject.com and created by Davo Sime, Viral Faisalovers, Olena Panasovska and Vecotriconset10.

Please note that, for the privacy of those involved, Living Water has requested this image be blurred.

