



PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE
THESSALONIANS

Lesson 7 • 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

October 17, 2021



LESSON PLAN



Lesson	Date	Passage
1	9/5/2021	Introduction
2	9/12/2021	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
3	9/19/2021	1 Thessalonians 2:1-16
4	9/26/2021	1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13
5	10/3/2021	1 Thessalonians 4:1-12
6	10/10/2021	1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11
7	10/17/2021	1 Thessalonians 5:12-28
8	10/24/2021	2 Thessalonians 1:1-12
9	10/31/2021	2 Thessalonians 2:1-12
10	11/7/2021	2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5
11	11/14/2021	2 Thessalonians 3:6-18
12	11/21/2021	Review
13	11/28/2021	Reading and Reflection

Passage Outline

- Closing Instructions (5:12-22)
- Benediction (5:23-24)
- Personal Requests (5:25-28)



5 minutes – 11:10 to 11:15

- **Review** – In the last lesson, Paul answered and clarified questions that Timothy brought back with his report from the Thessalonians. Their first topic was about what happened to those believers who die before Christ's coming. The second was about when Christ would return.
- After addressing their questions, Paul now closes his letter. In our text this morning, Paul's final words are both personal and important. As this letter is read aloud, these will be the last thoughts and connection that Paul leaves them with. The feel to Paul's conclusion to the letter feels different. It seems like a series of disconnected thoughts as Paul rushes to finish. Perhaps he is dictating the letter while the messenger waits at the door to take the letter for delivery to Thessalonica.
- Read 1 Thes. 5:12-28
- Review Outline

Instructions on Community (v. 5:12-22)

- A Life Oriented Toward Leadership (5:12-13)
- A Life Oriented Toward Others (5:14-15)
- A Life Oriented Toward God (5:16-22)



10 minutes – 11:15 to 11:30

- This final section of the letter begins with “We ask you brothers”. It not only marks a new section of the letter, but it also establishes the weight of the requests that follow. Have you ever been in a conversation with someone and they begin a sentence by using your name? “Now Mark, ...” certainly gets my attention. When my Mother wanted to really get my attention it was “Mark Kevin Schindler come here right now.” The use of a noun to address someone somehow emphasizes the importance of what is being said.
- Paul is not providing advice or making suggestions. He is giving them instructions on community that are critical to their life in Christ. The verb “ask” here is the idea again of urging or to make **as** plea. This is a strong exhortation for the Thessalonians to follow the directives Paul is giving them.
- Paul starts in verses 12 and 13 by first addressing community with instructions on how they were to live with respect toward leadership. The description here makes it clear that Paul is speaking of Elders in the church. Paul asks them to do two things. **What are they?**
 - To respect; **what does this mean?** To recognize authority and hold them in high regard. To give them due regard and give honor. Carries with it

the obligation of submission.

- To esteem; **what does this mean?** To appreciate and admire. To assign worth and value. Note how Paul qualifies their esteem. **With what characteristic?** Very highly in love. The idea here is not just an academic appreciation. There is more to it than that. It is to be conveyed and lived out in loyalty and love.
- Additionally, the lack of any exceptions here implies that the church is to give respect and honor regardless of an Elder's social position, popularity, riches, or personality.
- In these verses we also see three aspects that describe the nature of leadership in community. **What are they?**
 - They labor and work in the church; to serve and minister
 - They are over the church; to lead and have authority
 - They are to admonish the church; to correct and call us to obedience to the word, even when it isn't popular
- Look at the second half of verse 13. **Why is the church to live this way with respect toward leadership?** So that there may be peace in the church. In studying this, I am convinced that this sentence here is connected to the instructions that precede it. It is not inserted here as an independent thought. Paul's point is that when the church regards its leadership with honor and values them, there will be peace in the church. When the relationship between the church and its leadership is good, harmony and unity will follow. Conversely, when the relationship between the church and its leadership is poor, it will sow seeds of discord and division and the people will struggle.
- In verses 14 and 15, Paul shifts to urge them **to life** oriented toward others. Paul again strongly urges them as fellow believers. There are a number of important commands here. **What are they?**
 - Admonish the idle; those **who lazy** and unwilling to work; possibly those who were undisciplined
 - Encourage the fainthearted; give strength to those **where** timid or ready to give up the faith
 - Help the weak; likely referring to those who were physically weak or those in need; give assistance to those who were struggling
 - Be patient with all; to give grace, long-suffering, and be charitable to everyone, even the person who runs you the wrong way and drives you crazy at times
 - Do good to one another and others; not repaying evil for evil (no taking vengeance, tendency of the flesh), but to **always** seek to do good toward others; idea of loving, forgiving, and caring; this will be a contrast and witness to the world
- Paul's last set of instructions is aimed toward God. In verses 16 to 18 we have three exhortations that are to characterize a believer's relationship with God.

These are three things we should do. **What are these?**

- Rejoice always; to be joyful in all circumstances; for the Thessalonians, this meant even in the midst of suffering. We do not deny or minimize grief and trials. But we recognize that hardship is God working in us to strengthen our faith and infuse our hearts with hope. As believers we rejoice in times of celebration and in times of trouble knowing that in either case God loves us and is blessing us.
 - Pray without ceasing; a repeated command to continually speak to God. We are to fill our days with divine conversations. I think it is less about talking to God at a specific time of day or place (which is good) and more about a daily awareness and talking with God in every time and place of our lives (which is better).
 - Give thanks in every circumstance; being thankful is an essential part of our relationship with God and part of His will for us as believers. We are to be thankful in all circumstances; in every situation whether good or bad. It is how we demonstrate our faith in God's sovereign love and goodness to us.
- In verses 19 to 22 we have three exhortations that are **not** to characterize a believer's relationship with God. These are three things we should not do. **What are these?**
- Do not quench the Spirit; literally, to put out the fire. The work of the Spirit is always for the good of the believer and our community together. For that reason, it should not be restricted or extinguished. There are many ways in which we can quench the Spirit. When we are not in the word and in prayer we starve the fire of fuel. When we do not come together in community to hear the word, to worship, to serve, and to encourage one another the Spirit is suppressed. When we live in unrepentant sin, we quench the Spirit.
 - Do not despise the proclamation of God's word; in other words, we are to desire the preaching and exhortation of God's word in the church. But we are to test what we hear and hold fast to what is true. We are to love God's word so that we may know Him more.
 - Abstain from evil; to avoid and reject every kind of evil. We are to shun or keep apart from every kind of evil. Note that the proper interpretation here does not include the idea of appearance of every kind of evil.

Benediction (v. 5:23-24)

- A Godward blessing (v. 23)
- A Godward assurance (v. 24)



10 minutes – 11:30 to 11:40

- After communicating final instructions, Paul offers up a short prayer. Letters during this time were often closed with a benediction. They often took the form of a prayer or well wishes from the sender on behalf of the recipient. In these two verses, Paul offers up a blessing and encouragement for the Thessalonian believers.
- Verse 23 starts the benediction by invoking the name of God to bring blessing. This not just Paul wishing or hoping for blessing. He is definite in affirming that the divine source of this blessing is God himself. Paul's use of the title "God of peace" reminds us that he is the source of our salvation and our peace with God. This connects us with his subsequent thought that it is the God of our salvation who carries out the work of sanctification within us. We as believers must strive to align our lives with God's will. But in that ongoing process of being made holy we are in no way left to attain that goal on our own. Just as God has brought us peace and righteousness through his Son, He will carry out His work in our lives through the Holy Spirit. He is there in the struggle against our flesh.
- Note the depth of Paul's desire expressed here. **What are some of the words used in this prayer to characterize their sanctification?**

- Completely; through and through
 - Whole spirit, soul, and body; our entire being. Permeating every part of who we are
 - Blameless; without shame or guilt. We will stand before God clothed in the righteousness of Christ.
- Paul's prayer here is that God would sanctify the Thessalonians so that their whole being, everything that they were, would be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a prayer that God would make them blameless in salvation and keep them blameless so that they will one day stand before him without shame or guilt. Paul's prayer is that the work of salvation effected in their calling and conversion would be brought to complete sanctification at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Do we pray like this for one another? When requests are shared with us, do we pray more for God to change their circumstances or for God to change their hearts?**
 - In verse 24 Paul continues his benediction with an encouraging assurance. If the goal of complete sanctification seems unattainable, Paul adds a note of confidence assurance in the one who brings about this sanctifying work. He reminds them that the one who calls us is faithful. Paul says, "He will do it." What God begins in our election and calling will be completed at the time of the coming of Jesus Christ. Paul expresses his complete confidence that God will continue this sanctifying work in them to the very end. Paul reminds them of the faithfulness of God. We are to understand here with certainty that God will fulfill the promise of sanctification to his people. **Do you believe this?** This is the confidence and strength of faith that each of us should have. That God will complete the work in us both here in the present and fully at the time of his coming.

Personal Requests (v. 5:25-28)

- For prayer (v. 25)
- For extended greetings (v. 26)
- For inclusive communication (v. 27)
- For divine grace (v. 28)



10 minutes – 11:40 to 11:50

- Having offered up a prayer of a caring shepherd, Paul closes the letter with four specific personal requests.
- Paul's first request is found in versed 25. **What does he ask for?** Prayer. Again, note the use of "Brothers" here emphasizes the importance of this request. Just as Paul has prayed for them in the last two verses, he now asks them to pray for him. Prayer is to be reciprocal; offered up for each other. We are to pray for others who in turn pray for us. We pray for church leadership who also prays for those of us in the church. This is what prayer in the church is to look like.
- Paul's next request in verse 26 is for the Thessalonians to extend Paul's greetings and affections to the rest of the church. At this time, a kiss on the forehead or cheek was a common form of greeting. While it is not widely practiced in the US, such expressions are still common in other parts of the world (Venezuela – "besito"). Paul's desire here for the church to express its unity, care, and solidarity in the face of suffering. To greet each other in this way affirmed their mutual care and connection in Christ.
- In verse 27, we see Paul's third request. Here at the very end of this letter, Paul personally adds a final exhortation. We see this change in the change from "we"

to “I”. It is possible that Paul himself wrote this final part of the letter in his own hand. Note that the language of the command here is very strong. “I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers”, Paul says. The verb translated “I charge” means that Paul wants them to swear by or before the Lord that they will read this letter to all the members of the church. They are to be bound by an oath to make sure the content of this letter is communicated to everyone. It is likely that the reason for such a strong command is that Paul is aware that there are remaining tensions between certain members of the congregation. It would seem likely that Timothy would report such concerns back to Paul. It is important to Paul that all of the believers in Thessalonica hear this letter, not just some. Additionally, the public reading of the letter would reconnect Paul again with this young church. The letter stood in Paul’s place as a representative of his presence and authority.

- Like most of Paul’s letters, 1 Thessalonians ends with a blessing of grace. In verse 28, Paul’s last request is for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to be with them . Paul does not simply wish health, strength, or prosperity on the readers. But rather he invokes a blessing on them for what they need most. Their greatest need and ours, is for the grace that comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember that this letter began in verse 1 with a desire for grace as well as for peace. The person of Jesus, the Lord and Christ, is the fountain from which the grace of God pours out and flows to them. This benediction is far from being a mere formality tacked to the end of the letter. The blessing here, that divine grace would be given to them from the Lord Jesus Christ, embodies Paul desire for them to embrace the fullness of salvation that comes from the one who is their sole Sovereign and Savior. So ends Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians.

Structure of the First Letter to the Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians

- Opening
 - Greeting (1:1)
 - Thanksgiving (1:2-3)
 - Encouragement (1:4-10)
- Body
 - Fellowship in the Gospel (2:1-3:13)
 - Important Instructions (4:1-5:22)
- Closing (5:23-28)

5 minutes – 11:50 to 11:55



5 minutes – 11:55 to 12:00

Answer to question what it means that the dead in Christ shall arise.

1. When we die we will be present with Christ.
2. When Jesus returns, he will bring with Him those who have died in Him; they will have risen first or before those who are alive.
3. While those who died are with Christ in Heaven now, they are waiting for the resurrection of the body to receive their new spiritual body.
4. The spirit and soul of these believers will then be united with their new body through this resurrection on the day Christ returns.
5. Then both those who have been resurrected and those who are alive when the Lord returns will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.