

**Grace Community Church
A Redeemed Reputation
April 5, 2026**

HOME GROUP QUESTIONS

1. **Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**, stopping after each verse to list what the text reveals to us about the Thessalonians.
2. **Read 1:1 and Acts 17:4**. Generally, what diversity is most obviously present in our church body? What might be a parallel for your home group, or even Grace Community Church, when considering the different backgrounds of those who were in the Thessalonian church as described in Acts 17:4.
3. **Read 1:2-3**. Share the name of someone to thank God for in our church, who is not in your home group, and tell why you thank God for them. BONUS: Have someone take the initiative to let each person know someone in their group thanked the Lord for them.
4. **Read 1:4-7**. Share something that changed in your life to show the gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. Was there any person in particular who you would say caused you to give Christianity serious consideration? Who did you imitate after becoming a Christian?
5. **Read 1:8-10**. See the Tim Keller quote in the notes below. Contemplate and share answers to these three questions taken from Ligon Duncan's commentary on this passage. These questions are to help identify idols we may have in our life. See his quote below on idolatry.
 - a. What do I think about? What do I think about when I'm not thinking about anything else?
 - b. How do I spend my time, my resources, and my energy?
 - c. What disappoints me? What absolutely crushes me with disappointment? What, if I lost it or failed at it, would make me feel crushed or worthless?
 - d. "The difference between a converted believer and an unconverted person is not whether we struggle with idolatry—it is what we do when we realize we are

struggling. The converted believer has committed to turn away from an idol, however acceptable in our culture or rooted in our heart it may be, and to serve God instead, by trusting him to deliver and satisfy. In this sense, we have turned from our idols to serve the living and true God. It doesn't mean that our battle with idolatry ends, but it should mean that people can tell that we are worshipers of God ultimately, rather than worshipers of anything else."¹

SERMON NOTES

Scripture References

- Acts 17:1-11 was last week's text to catch what happened during Paul and Silas' visit to Thessalonica.
- Matthew 5:16 ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
- 1 Timothy 4: 12 ¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.
- Philippians 3:17 ¹⁷ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.
- Acts 17:4 ⁴ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.
- Romans 5:6-8 ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- 1 Thessalonians 1:8 in the Message – “The news of your faith in God is out. We don't even have to say anything anymore—you're the message.”²

¹ Ligon Duncan, [1 & 2 Thessalonians for You](#), ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2023), 35–36.

² Eugene H. Peterson, [The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language](#) (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), 1 Th 1:8.

- “He is not here, for he has risen” (Mat. 28:6). It’s also been said “This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Quotes

- Richard Baxter - “We must not unsay with our lives what we say with our tongues.”
- Want to see the Lion King [clip](#)?
- John Stott – “Nevertheless, it is still correct to say that every church has two homes, two environments, two habitats. It lives in God and it lives in the world.”³
- John Calvin called verse three “a brief definition of true Christianity.”
- Want to read about [Eddie McCombs](#)? I did try on his two National Championship rings.
- John Stott – “We must never divorce what God has married, namely his Word and his Spirit. The Word of God is the Spirit’s sword. The Spirit without the Word is weaponless; the Word without the Spirit is powerless.”⁴
- Here’s the [Blackaby](#) devotional journal
- My bible was probably most similar to this [one](#)
- Here is the [map](#) of Macedonia and Achaia
- Martin Luther – “That to which you set your heart and put your trust is properly your god.”
- Tim Keller says: Sin isn’t only doing bad things, it is more fundamentally making good things into ultimate things. Sin is building your life and meaning on anything, even a very good thing, more than on God. Whatever we build our life on will drive us and enslave us. Sin is primarily idolatry.⁵

³ John R. W. Stott, [The Message of Thessalonians: The Gospel & the End of Time](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 28.

⁴ John R. W. Stott, [The Message of Thessalonians: The Gospel & the End of Time](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 34.

⁵ James H. Grant Jr., [1 & 2 Thessalonians: The Hope of Salvation](#), ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 52.

- Jon Courson – Recounting verse 3, Paul says, “You turned to God from idols, which is the work of faith. You serve the living God, which is the labor of love. You wait for His Son from heaven, which is the patience of hope.”⁶

Sermon Outline

- **Main point of the text:** Paul encourages the Thessalonians because of God’s working in them and through them.
- **Main point of the sermon:** God works in others through his work in us.
- **Title:** A Redeemed Reputation
 - **(1-3)** Brings Praise to God
 - **(4-7)** Proves the Holy Spirit’s Presence
 - **(8-10)** Proclaims Jesus as the Living Savior

⁶ Jon Courson, [*Jon Courson’s Application Commentary*](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 1331.