

REJOICE ALWAYS!

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

*A Ten Week Study
in 1 and 2 Thessalonians*

REJOICE ALWAYS

Week One

Day One | 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Acts 17:1-9

In your own words, describe how the church in Thessalonica got started. What was it about the Gospel message that was “turning the whole world upside down”? Can you describe a time when you experienced resistance or conflict when trying to do something good? Do you tend to give up when things get difficult? Why?

Day Two | 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

Who are some of the people that you are most thankful for? How often do you pray prayers of thanks to God for those people? Paul praises them for their efforts (work of faith/labor of love) and their belief (steadfastness of hope). Do you tend to be stronger in faith or in works? What adjustment could you make in your thoughts or actions to grow stronger in your weaker area?

Day Three | 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

What evidence have you seen of the power of God at work in your life? Can you describe a time when God worked through you to bless someone else? What kind of men do you think they proved to be? What is meant by that statement?

Day Four | 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8

Who has been a good example for you to imitate as you seek to follow the Lord? Who is looking to you as their example to follow in knowing Jesus? Can you describe a time when you had the joy of the Holy Spirit in the midst of affliction? Are you proud of the reputation that goes before you? If not, what could you do to change that?

Day Five | 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

What does it mean for Jesus to be at the center of your life & testimony? It's useful to be able to share your personal testimony of faith in Jesus in differing amounts of time (30 seconds, 3 minutes, 10 minutes). Share the appropriate version now for the setting that you are in. Do that a few more times this week and follow up next week on how it went.

Group Question: Do you have a strong desire for a deeper relationship with Jesus? What could ignite that desire or help you to pursue a deeper relationship with Him?

Prayer: Reflection and Response

Did this week's passage lead you to a sense of Praise? Worship? Gratitude? Did it lead to conviction? A need to confess & ask for forgiveness? A request for God's help? Write down a prayer, speaking to God simply & honestly in light of those reflections.

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Week Two

Day One | 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2

What obstacles have stood in the way of you sharing & living out your faith in Jesus? How did you respond to or overcome those obstacles? Is there an area of your life in which you need to be more bold in your faith? Can you describe a time when you pushed through conflict and opposition to accomplish something good?

Day Two | Acts 16:6-10

Describe a time that God used a closed door to steer you towards His will. What has it looked like when God has spoken to you in your life? Did you hear an audible voice, see something in scripture, receive Godly advice, have an opportunity, a dream? How do you know that it is God speaking to you in those situations?

Day Three | Acts 16:11-15

How do you see Paul intentionally looking to share the Gospel in Philippi? What does intentional discipleship look like in your life? What caused Lydia to pay attention to what Paul was saying? What action did she immediately take when she believed? If you haven't been baptized, what would need to happen for you to take that step?

Day Four | Acts 16:16-24

What effect do you think the demonized girl had on their ability to do ministry? Where does the power to cast out demons come from? Are demons still active today? What were the girl's owners really motivated by? Have you ever suffered for your faith?

Day Five | Acts 16:25-40

What is surprising about what Paul & Silas are doing in the prison? What was it that convinced the jailer that their God was real? How do you feel about the fact that God allowed them to suffer but also used that as part of their witness in this city? Have you had a similar experience? Do you tend to assume that suffering has no positive value?

Group Question: Share with your group the next action step that God is calling you to take at this time. Is it to get baptized, be more intentional about sharing Jesus, pray to receive Him as your Savior, pray for more witnessing opportunities? Something else?

Prayer: Reflection and Response

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Week Three

Day One | 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4

After what they experienced in Philippi, what gave them the boldness to keep proclaiming the Gospel? What impact does conflict and difficulty have on your willingness to keep engaging people? What was their motivation for sharing the Gospel? Are you motivated to witness in the same way? Why?

Day Two | 1 Thessalonians 2:5-8

Can you describe a time when you questioned someone's motivation for trying to connect with you? What impact did that have on your relationship with them? How do we model this same sort of genuine discipleship and love in our lives? What do you think it looked like for them to share the Gospel & themselves with the church?

Day Three | 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12

Why do you think that, in Thessalonica, Paul chose to work rather than receive support from the people? What is this passage showing you about how discipling relationships should look? What is the relationship between our personal righteousness and the effectiveness of our witnessing & discipleship with others? Why is that?

Day Four | 1 Thessalonians 2:13

How do you know that the Bible is the word of God? How do you see the word of God at work in you in this season of your life? Why would it have been bad for them to have received it as the teachings of Paul rather than the word of God?

Day Five | 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

Why did both the early Jewish & Gentile churches suffer so much persecution & opposition to their ministry? What caused the church to grow during this time? What does persecution & opposition to the Gospel look like today?

Group Question: Who needs your prayers this week? Do you know of any churches, missionaries or people groups that are experiencing persecution currently?

Prayer: Reflection and Response

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Week Four

Day One | 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

Why do you think Paul had developed such a deep and affectionate relationship with this church? What was at the center of their relationship? In what way was the Thessalonian church Paul's glory & joy? What treasures from this life will you take with you into eternity? How are you making investment into eternal things?

Day Two | 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Describe a time that you went through a season of difficulty that tested your faith. What did you find to be most helpful and encouraging in that season? Who encouraged you or helped to strengthen your faith? Are you currently in a position to encourage or bless someone who is struggling? How could you help them this week?

Day Three | 1 Thessalonians 3:6-7

Who has been an encouragement or inspiration to you because of the strength of their faith? Why do you think people often tend to love theology or love people, but not both? Which direction do you naturally lean? How can you grow in your weaker area? Why do you think Paul was able to excel in both areas?

Day Four | 1 Thessalonians 3:8-10

How significant was prayer in Paul's ministry to the churches? Why do you think he placed such an emphasis on regular & consistent prayer for those that he was discipling? Who deserved the credit for the steadfastness of their faith? What do you think was lacking in their faith? How would Paul provide that?

Day Five | 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

What is the connection between love & holiness? In your life, for whom are you most grateful and thankful to God? In your daily life, how much of it do you think of as personal choice and how much do you see as God directing your path?

Group Question: What steps could you take to increase the number of people that you regularly pray for, and improve the quality of how you pray for them?

Prayer: Reflection and Response

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Week Five

Day One | 1 Thessalonians 4:1

What does it look like to “walk and please God?” Can you describe some of the ways that you are doing that today? How has that grown or changed over time as you have matured in your faith? If you were to walk in a way that was more & more pleasing to God, what would be the evidence of that growth & increase?

Day Two | 1 Thessalonians 4:2-6

What impact should knowing God have on our passions & feelings of lust? How does the Gospel transform our perspective or thinking in those areas? What does it mean when he says that “the Lord is an avenger in all these things”?

Day Three | 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

Why is purity & holiness an essential part of our calling? What is the relationship between our sexual purity and our ability to follow Jesus well? What are some of the ways that our culture, your family, and God look at sexual purity differently? Are there any ways in which they see things similarly? Which holds the greatest influence over your thinking and behavior?

Day Four | 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

How was the Thessalonian church demonstrating brotherly love for the church in Macedonia? Paul praises them for this, but urges them to do it more and more. What are some of the areas in which you are serving the Lord well? How can you do that more and more - what would it look like? Who or what could help you with that?

Day Five | 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Why were they encouraged to live quietly and mind their own affairs? How does financial self-sufficiency increase our ability to serve the Lord well? Why is it detrimental to be dependent on others? How well are you doing with these areas in your own life? If you could make one improvement in these areas, what would it be?

Group Question: What activities or habits help you to have a soft heart & to love others well? Is there any distraction that you need to remove from your life this week?

Prayer: Reflection and Response

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Week Six

Day One | 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

What is your understanding of what happens to us when we die? When you have lost loved ones, how did you find that balance between hope & grief? Who are you most looking to be reunited with in heaven? What is your basis for that hope?

Day Two | 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

When you think about the second coming of Jesus, does it bring feelings of hope or fear? If Jesus were to return today, what is your understanding of what would happen? Do you feel like you have an adequate understanding of what the Bible says about the end times? If you'd like to understand more, what is the next step that you could take?

Day Three | 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

What does it mean when it says that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night? If Jesus returns today, are you ready to meet Him? What gives you confidence that you are in a right standing with Him? Who else needs to hear that truth?

Day Four | 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8

Will Christians be taken by surprise when the Lord returns? In a practical sense, what does it look like to remain awake and sober? Faith, love and salvation or described as protective armor. What can you do this week to strengthen and reinforce that armor?

Day Five | 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

What is the source of our confidence regarding the end times? Do you think that God wants us to live in uncertainty or to live with confidence regarding eternity? How does this confidence lead us to build others up & encourage them? Who has God brought into your life that needs your encouragement this week?

Group Question: What does it look like to have a balanced and healthy understanding of the end times?

Prayer: Reflection and Response

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Week Seven

Day One | 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Why is respect for spiritual leaders an essential element of having peace within the church? What is the reason that Paul says they should esteem them highly? What are some appropriate & inappropriate reasons for challenging church leaders?

Day Two | 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15

What would it look like to admonish the idle? How could you encourage the fainthearted or help the weak in our church in practical ways? Why is patience so important? Can you describe a time when someone else's sin led you to sin in response? What was the result? How do we reflect the Gospel in our obedience?

Day Three | 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Is it unrealistic for Paul to call us to Rejoice Always? What challenges and difficulties had Paul faced in his life? Practically speaking, what does it look like to pray without ceasing? Why is it God's will that we give thanks in all circumstances? What are some things that you are most thankful for in your current season of life? What are some of the challenges you are facing?

Day Four | 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

What does it mean to quench the Spirit? What things do we do that quench the Spirit? How do we test prophecies or test someone who claims to have a word from God? How do you personally approach those sorts of things? Is there a form of evil that is currently a temptation for you? What do you need to do in order to abstain from it?

Day Five | 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

What does it mean to be completely sanctified? What would that look like in your life? Who has the power to make us blameless before God? Do you believe that Jesus has the desire and the ability to ultimately present you blameless before the Father? Why did Paul emphasize that the letter should be shared with everyone?

Group Question: How active is the Holy Spirit in your daily life? How can you create space for the Spirit to move and work more and more in your life?

Prayer: Reflection and Response

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Week Eight

Day One | 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4

What two things were growing and increasing in the people of the church? Are they growing in your life as well? Do you think they were growing in spite of the persecution that they faced or because of it? How can you get your love for others to grow? What do you think Paul's "grace & peace" greeting means?

Day Two | 2 Thessalonians 1:5-8

Where was Paul placing his hope for righteous judgment & justice? Why is it so tempting for us to seek vengeance on our own? Does your relationship with Jesus give you comfort & perspective in the midst of suffering? How do you find a healthy balance between grieving for loss and brokenness & remaining hopeful and joyful?

Day Three | 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10

What does the Bible say will happen to those who do not know and follow Jesus when they die? Do you struggle with the Biblical idea that some people will be eternally punished? How does the love of God relate to His divine justice?

Day Four | 2 Thessalonians 1:11

Do you find Paul's prayer challenging & convicting? What could make your prayers for your loved ones more powerful? What makes us worthy of the calling of Jesus? Where do we get the power to do works of faith?

Day Five | 2 Thessalonians 1:12

What is the end result of the work that Jesus is doing in us? Who gets the glory for our obedience & faith? What does it look like to find our glory in Jesus? What role does grace play in this process of making us holy?

Group Question: What are some of the ways that you have changed and become more righteous as you have walked with Jesus & followed Him?

Prayer: Reflection and Response

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Week Nine

Day One | 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

How would you describe your feelings on the end times prophecies of the Bible? Do you fear the end times? Why or why not? If the day of the Lord had already come, why would that cause fear & confusion amongst the Thessalonian church? How can you help others to avoid confusion & concern regarding the end times?

Day Two | 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8

Who is the man of lawlessness? What characteristics will help to identify him? Why is rebellion always at the heart of opposition to God? Have you been rebellious towards God in the past? Are you currently acting in rebellion towards Him? What will ultimately happen to the man of lawlessness? How does that impact your fear of him?

Day Three | 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

Do followers of Jesus need to worry about being deceived by the man of lawlessness? What does it mean to love the truth & believe the truth? How do you know that you love & believe the truth? What unrighteousness does our culture currently take pleasure in? Where are you most tempted to join them, and how can you resist it?

Day Four | 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

What enables them (and us) to stand firm in our faith? What does it mean to you to know that you are loved and chosen by God? Share some examples of the ways that the Spirit is sanctifying you and making you more like Jesus. What will it look like to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Day Five | 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Can you describe a time that you were comforted by God through the hope of the Gospel? What would it look like for you to be established in every good work & word? What things would change or be different in your life? What are the times & situations when you are most tempted to forget these truths and miss the comfort of God's grace?

Group Question: This passage deals a lot with comfort in the midst of fear. What is causing fear in this season of your life? How can you experience God's comfort in that?

Prayer: Reflection and Response

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Week Ten

Day One | 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Who needs your prayer this week as they seek to share the Gospel? How have you seen the faithfulness of God demonstrated in your life? What impact does your faithfulness & obedience have on the Christians & non-Christians around you? What are some of the ways that God guards & protects us from the evil one?

Day Two | 2 Thessalonians 3:6-9

Why do you think idleness was a problem in the Thessalonian church? Why should those who are idle be excluded from fellowship? How are we meant to approach & apply this today? Should Pastors earn a salary from the church? Why?

Day Three | 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

How does laziness and taking advantage of generosity impact a church community? Does hard work conflict with the idea of dependence and reliance on God? How does God use our hard work for His glory? What impact on a church community is there when someone is a busybody or a gossip? How should we address these situations?

Day Four | 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15

Why are we tempted to grow weary of doing good? Is there good work in your life that you have grown weary of doing? How can you reset your perspective and reignite your passion in that area? Why is it hard to hold others accountable in a church community? How can we reprimand someone as a brother and not as an enemy?

Day Five | 2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

Why does Paul end this letter by identifying God as the God of peace? Take a moment and pray for peace in the areas of your life where you most need it. Consider the impact that Paul had on this church and generations beyond it. Who are the people in your life that you can impact in a personal and encouraging way for God's glory?

Group Question: What mission field has God given to you in this season of your life? How can you better focus on the people that God has placed in front of you?

Prayer: Reflection and Response

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