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## ABOUT THIS STUDY

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The Thessalonian Church thought that they were heading out and up to heaven right away, done with this world and hitting the road to be with God. Turns out, they (and we) have some time to spend on earth first.

As we wait for Christ's return, we live a counter-cultural life: in submission to authority when others buck up, with gratitude when others complain, in sexual purity in the midst of sexual revolution, loving each other rather than ranting and tearing each other down.

We live lives pleasing to God rather than pleasing to people. Serving God rather than serving people. Walking in step with God, not the world. Shouting God's message, not parroting the world's.

This is the life we have been called to.

We live for God with the end in mind. The end we know is coming, but isn't here yet.

This is the counter-cultural life of the Christian: ***following Jesus together, against the grain of the world, until He returns.***

Follow the below schedule to study the passages on your own, and discuss what God is showing you together with your group. More Bible study resources can be found at [thewellsilverspring.org/resources](http://thewellsilverspring.org/resources).



## PERSONAL DAILY STUDY

Following the below process, prayerfully read the scheduled passage of scripture. Spend the entire week on the given section, slowly reading and rereading it in order to deeply, and accurately, interact with God. Consider the above supplemental questions per each given week. You can also check out our other simple guides online for additional Bible study resources at [thewellsilverspring.org/resources](http://thewellsilverspring.org/resources).

### What Does It Say?

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First, we ask: *“What does this say?”*

Read the passage a few times and carefully observe the words; give full attention to what it says. The purpose is to saturate in the content of the passage.

Look for things such as: important words (what’s being talked about), conjunctions (how is one idea connected to another), admonitions (something being commanded), contrasts, comparisons, illustrations, repeated phrases/ words, mood, and grammatical construction (verb tenses, prepositional phrases, etc.).

Linger here, listening to what God is saying in the detail of His words. Write down questions that the passage raises for you, things you don’t understand, ideas you’d like to pursue further.

### What Does It Mean?

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We now ask ourselves: *“What does it mean?”*

Use the observations you just gathered, the context of the section, and other passages of scripture to get at the meaning of what you have read.

Consider using [a commentary](#), the [GROW](#) or [SOAP](#) Bible study tools, the [ESV Study Bible](#) notes, or other resources to help.

Next, summarize the main truth you heard from God in His word.

Consider writing out the synthesized truth in your own words. Outline, diagram, draw, or flowchart the line of thought or main idea of the passage. What jumped out

### So What?

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Now we must ask: *“So what?”*

After meeting God in His word, we cannot ignore, or walk away unchanged. Why does the truth you heard matter to you today?

Is there something new to believe, cling to, or a sin to confess?

Is there something for you to do (or not do) in response to what you have read?

Is there someone with whom to share this truth (believer or nonbeliever)?

Do not forget to apply the gospel for your forgiveness, and as the reason compelling your obedience:

***Christ is enough!***

He has forgiven you for \_\_\_\_\_  
and He is the reason why we \_\_\_\_\_.



## READ

# Acts 17 - 18

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## QUESTIONS

Read Acts 17-18 to get context for the letter to the church in Thessalonica. What was Paul doing that “turned the world upside down?” Who are the main people and groups in this passage? What are their reactions to Paul’s actions?

Read 1 Thessalonians twice. Who wrote the letter? To whom? What themes stick out?

When facing opposition, we often react with fight or flight. We fight: get defensive, argue, virtue signal, or write aggressive social media posts. Or flight: we run away scared, avoiding similar situations to avoid pain. What can we learn from Paul and the others about how to face opposition?

## SO WHAT?

Have you seen God “turn the world upside down” or create a stir around you, or opposition to you because of your life following Jesus? Why or why not?

What does opposition look like for us in our cultural context? How would you compare these things to what we see in Paul’s life?

Would you say you live a counter-cultural life because of Christ? Why or why not? In what ways?



**READ**

## 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

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**QUESTIONS**

What characteristics about the Thessalonians is Paul highlighting in his prayers?

What does Acts 17 and 18 tell us about “what kind of men [Paul, Silas, and Timothy] proved to be among you for your sake?”

How is the good news (“*gospel*”) of Jesus central to Paul’s commendation of the Thessalonians?

**SO WHAT?**

How did the gospel come to you, and how has the good news of Jesus changed your life?

What role does character play in our witness among a hostile culture?

How is your work of faith, labor of love, and steadfastness of hope?



## READ

# 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10

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## QUESTIONS

What about the Thessalonians was being “sounded forth” across Macedonia and Achaia?

What does it mean to have “joy of the Holy Spirit” in the face of much affliction?

What is Paul’s chief/summary commendation of the Thessalonians (v. 9-10)? How would you explain this in your own words?

## SO WHAT?

What is idolatry? How do we see idolatry in today’s context? How do you see it in your life?

Why is sharing your story a fitting way to share the gospel in today’s hostile culture?

How have you turned and how are you turning from idolatry to worship Jesus rather than other things, people, etc? How is He becoming your security, purpose, hope, identity?

Is there anyone in your context that might connect with your story of transformation? What would be your next step to share a recent evidence of God’s grace in your life with someone close to you – a neighbor, coworker, friend, or family member?



## READ

# 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

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## QUESTIONS

Read Acts 16:11-40. How does this shape your understanding of verse 2?

What was Paul, Silas, and Timothy's motivation in sharing the gospel with the Thessalonians?

How do they describe their ministry among the Thessalonians?

What from this passage gives further definition to the main idea of living your life to seek the pleasure of God and not the pleasure of men and women?

## SO WHAT?

What does it look like to not seek glory amidst a culture that values performance, public declarations, and personal brand building?

Where do you have a hard time seeking God's pleasure rather than the pleasure of people? How are you a people-pleaser instead of a God-pleaser?

Paul shares his life with people deeply and he shares the words of the gospel with them. Which are you stronger in: building intentional relationships, or sharing about Jesus? How might one help the other increase?



**READ**

## 1 Thessalonians 2:9-16

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**QUESTIONS**

How does Paul describe his relationship with the Thessalonians when he was with them?

How do we discern what is the word of God and what is the word of men?

What kinds of things did the Thessalonians suffer from their own countrymen (*Acts 17:5-10*)?

How would you compare the persecution of today with this persecution?

**SO WHAT?**

Is your life a good picture for people of someone who is following Christ? Why or why not? Where would you like to see Him transform your witness?

Have you recently faced any persecution for your faith or sharing about Jesus? Why or why not? What happened?

What helps you persevere in your faith when facing persecution, suffering, or other obstacles? Is persecution or the threat of sharing the gospel the biggest barrier to you doing so?





**READ**

## 1 Thessalonians 2:17 - 3:5

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**QUESTIONS**

How did Paul feel about not being able to go see the Thessalonians?

What is Paul's hope, joy, or crown before Jesus returns? Why?

Why did Paul send Timothy to the Thessalonians?

What sacrifices did Paul make in sending Timothy?

**SO WHAT?**

What does this passage show us about the importance of community among believers?

Do you feel close, as friends, as family, with a few people in the church? Why or why not? What might be a next step towards growing in depth of relationship with someone at The Well?

How can you support a brother or sister who is struggling? How can you ask for help from a brother or sister in your struggles?



## READ

# 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

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## QUESTIONS

What news did Timothy report back to Paul?

What was Paul's reaction to this news?

Paul's prayer in verses 11-13 closes out the first section of his letter. What does Paul pray for?

Why does the growth of the church bring Paul such joy?

## SO WHAT?

What is something you are thankful for? Is there anything or anyone you are particularly thankful for here in the church body?

Is there anyone in your life that is growing in their relationship to Jesus because of your investment in your relationship with them? Why or why not?

How might that increase your joy? Who could you help grow in their faith? What might a next step towards intentional investment in someone else's life look like?



## READ

# 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

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## QUESTIONS

What does 'sanctification' mean (v. 3)?

What is the standard of living to which Paul is calling the Thessalonians? How does this compare to the way the Gentiles were living?

The church in Thessalonica was young and new in their faith. How would you describe their life of faith with Christ and the culture they had recently been embracing?

How does Paul describe brotherly love?

## SO WHAT?

What does it look like for you to pursue holiness in our current culture? Which of the cultural sins and currents have filtered into your life? Where do you need to turn from culture to live for Christ?

How does God support us in our pursuit of holiness? How have you been accepting or rejecting his help?

A summary of brotherly love and Christian living is found in v. 11-12. How does this summary compare with your life and words?



## READ

# 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

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## QUESTIONS

What does Paul mean by “those who are asleep” (v. 13)?

Paul writes this passage so the Thessalonians may not grieve in the same way non-Christians do. What does Paul tell them that would allow them to grieve differently?

Describe this paragraph, and this moment to come in history, in your own words.

What is there to grieve over in our world, and how does this impact these realities?

## SO WHAT?

What hope do we have in this news? What does this mean for your neighbors, coworkers, friends who don't yet know Christ?

What would change about your life if you lived with the end in mind? How should we structure our lives, knowing Christ is returning?



**READ**

## 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

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**QUESTIONS**

What is Paul implying by using the phrase “like a thief in the night”? Look at Matthew 24:43-44, Luke 12:39-40, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 3:3, and Revelation 16:15 for other uses.

What contrast does Paul make between the Thessalonians and those of the night?

What assurances does Paul give the Thessalonians about their status before God?

In light of the knowledge that Jesus is returning, how does Paul call the Thessalonians to live?

**SO WHAT?**

If you believed this was going to actually happen, how would it change your life today?

How would this change the way you live with believers?

How would this change the way you live with non-believers?



## READ

# 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

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## QUESTIONS

How does Paul call the Thessalonians to relate to their leaders? How does that compare with our culture's relationship with leadership?

What are Paul's final instructions to the Thessalonians?

What commands stick out to you?

Paul closes out this letter with prayer and assurances in v. 23-28. What does he highlight?

## SO WHAT?

There's a pervasiveness to Paul's instructions (Rejoice *always*. Pray *without ceasing*. Give thanks in *all* circumstances.). Would you say your relationship with Christ has filtered into the moments of your normal day? How? How do we as the church help each other in this?

Spend time praying now. List things to rejoice over. Pray on them. List the hard and "easy" aspects of your current circumstance. Pray over them.

As you think back over the counter-cultural life commended and commanded in 1 Thessalonians, what sticks out to you? Is there something for you to do or not do? Believe or not believe? Someone to share these things with?

## TOGETHER WITH YOUR 3D GROUP

Use the following format to discuss the passage together in your 3D group. You'll find the specific supplementary questions for the scripture passages

in the above schedule. You can also find the full details for 3D discussion in our [3D Meeting Guide](#). Here is a summary:

### Bible

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*First, discuss the Bible passage from the week:*

- 1 What does the passage say? What jumps out to you? What key ideas, commands, promises, words, ideas, etc, struck you this week?
- 2 How would you summarize the main truth from the section? How might this inform your thinking and shape the way we are to live?
- 3 Where is the gospel connected to this truth? What does this highlight about who we are, or about who God is?

### Life

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*Share about how this truth impacts your life today:*

For you today, why does this specifically matter?

Is there something God calling you to obey in response to His word?

Is there something you need to do or not do? Something to believe, promise to cling to, or a sin to confess?

Is there someone to share this truth with?

### Prayer

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*Pray throughout your time together.*

Offer praises to God when something encouraging is shared; ask for help from God as challenges are shared.

Close in prayer.

Spend time to respond to God's truth in the scriptures and from your conversation.

Praise Him.

Confess sin to Him.

Thank Him.

Ask Him for His power and provision.