

Week 1

1Thessalonians: Introduction

Read through the entire book of 1Thessalonians several times.

1. Observe themes and record these below.
2. Notice and write down repeated words and ideas.
3. What is your general impression of the overall tone of 1Thessalonians?
4. Where does a “turn” take place in the book? If you could divide it into two sections, where would you divide it?
5. Using other books of the bible, see what you can find out about the author and recipients. On the flip-side are a few questions you can answer as a way of introduction to the book.

1Thessalonians: Introduction

Who are the authors? What do you know about them?

How are Paul, Silas and Timothy connected? Where are Silas and Timothy first introduced in the book of Acts?

What can you learn about their connection to the Thessalonians from the book of Acts?

Observation: What does it say?

Start by looking for the basics:

Who – Who is performing or receiving the action?

What – What is occurring?

When – When is it occurring? Is there a sequence of events?

Where – Where is the action occurring? Does the location change within the paragraph? **Why** – What is the goal or purpose for the action? Who benefits?

How – What is the means or manner for accomplishing the action?

Key Words (especially theologically important terms)

Important Connectives - Indicate relationships within and between paragraphs; such as... after, then, as, until, before, when, now, while, because, for, since, so, therefore, thus, in order that, but.

Grammatical Construction - How does each word function in the sentence?

Verbs - What are the actions? Note the tense of the verb (when is the action performed) Is there a list of commands?

Noun - name of a person, place, thing or quality Adjective & Adverb - modifies or describes something

Figures of speech - Non-literal language (e.g. "I am the bread of life")

Comparison: points out the similarities between two or more related ideas, or simply joining like ideas. "...he will be **like** a tree firmly planted ..." (Ps.1:2-3)

Contrast: points out dissimilarities between thoughts or ideas. This indicator is often easily identified by the use of the word "but." "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident... **But** the fruit of the Spirit is...." (Galatians 5:19-23)

Questions: structure is built around questions posed and answered by the author (or a hypothetical opponent created by the author). "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?" (Rom. 6:1)

Repetition: reiteration of the same word or phrase (when a similar but not exact word, phrase or idea is repeated it is known as continuity)

Progression of Ideas: the movement of ideas from general to particular (Matt. 6:1-18) or particular to gen. (Jas 2).

Cause to Effect: the passage first states the cause and then directly correlates the effects. Romans 1:18-31 demonstrates the cause (rejection of God) and the effect (God gave them over). See also Romans 6:23.

Effect to Cause: opposite of cause to effect, the author states the effect and then substantiates it by stating the cause. In Romans 8:18-27 Paul describes the effect of longing, and in 8:28-30 he describes the cause, which is our certain future glorification.

Summarization: the author gathers the main ideas he has been trying to communicate and restates them in a summary. For examples see Hebrews 8:1-2 and Joshua 12.

Interpretation: What does it mean?

Observation is answering 'what does it say?' In interpretation you are asking 'what does this mean?' Or better 'what does Paul mean here?' As you observe, ask lots of questions like:

What does this word mean?

Why does he use this analogy?

What does Paul mean when he says we "were dead"?

Answering these questions is interpretation. Remember creativity in interpretation is not a virtue. Start your search for answers within the immediate context. Also, consider what others say now (your small group, pastor...) as well as in the past (commentaries). **Your goal is to discern the author's intended meaning.**

Application: How does this touch my life?

Once you have discovered the universal principle(s) from the text, then you move to application. How does this truth connect to my life? By putting your application in words you begin to hold yourself accountable for becoming a doer of the Word. Some basic guidelines for application are: 1) focus on the main themes expressed by the author; 2) keep it short; 3) make it practical. An example of an application from Matthew 28:18-20 is "Wherever I am, I should proclaim the gospel to all men in hope of making some disciples." Consider the following questions for application:

- Is there an example for me to follow or avoid? (Genesis 34; Joshua 1:9)
- Is there a sin or error for me to avoid? (1 Cor. 5:1)
- Is there a promise for me to claim? (Heb. 13:5)
- Is there a prayer for me to repeat? (Eph. 3:14-21)
- Is there a command for me to obey? (2 Timothy 2:22)
- Is there a condition for me to meet? (John 15:5)
- Is there a verse for me to memorize? (Psalm 119:11)
- Is there conviction from the Spirit to which I must respond? (1 Thess. 5:19)

Relate the application to your various relationships. Ask yourself, How should this application affect my attitudes, thoughts or actions:

- In relationship to God
- In relationship to myself
- In relationship to my family
- In relationship to my Christian friends
- In relationship to my non-Christians friends and the world relationship to my adversary

Create a plan of action

So, what will I do today, or this week, or this month to implement this application? Who will I ask to hold me accountable? How and when will I evaluate my progress? A plan of action for our application from Matthew 28 might look something like this:

By the power of the Holy Spirit I commit myself to asking my neighbor to lunch this week. I commit to daily pray for his salvation and for the opportunity to present a verbal witness to him during lunch. I will ask my Bible study leader to hold me accountable to initiate this plan by asking me next week if I have followed through.

Week 2

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Observations and Questions

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Why do they give thanks to God for the Thessalonians?

How did the gospel come to them?

What is being reported about the Thessalonians?

These boxes are for recording three themes and your application.

What does this passage reveal about God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)?

What do I notice about Paul's interaction with the Thessalonians?

What do I observe about the Thessalonians and their response?

Apply: How will I apply this to my life? Specifically, in what ways will it impact how I disciple others? Who will I share these things with?

Week 3

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Observations and Questions

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Why is it significant that Paul went onto Thessalonica after what happened at Philippi?

Throughout the passage, there are phrases like, “as you know” or “you are witnesses.” Why do you think that is? What is Paul trying to communicate?

Why was their behavior so critical?

What was Paul's hope for them?

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Week 4

1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

Observations and Questions

1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

We can notice the incredible power of the word of God. What were the results of the gospel in their lives? (If leading this, look over the lesson on the Word from the Compass and incorporate it.)

Read Acts 15:36-17:15. How does this help you to understand this passage?

The phrase, “having been taken away from you,” is the same ideas as being bereft or orphaned. What does this reveal about Paul’s relationship with them?

How are the Thessalonians his crown?

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Week 5

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

Observations and Questions

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

What do you know about Timothy? Why would he have sent Timothy?

Timothy went to “strengthen and encourage” the new believers. What do you think is involved in the process? What kind of things would they have needed?

Paul feared that their labor could have been in vain (vs.5). What does this say about discipleship and what we should expect, as we are involved in ministry? What impact can sufferings have on a disciple?

What is Paul’s response to the report from Timothy?

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Apply: How will I apply this to my life? Specifically, in what ways will it impact how I disciple others? Who will I share these things with?

Week 6

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Observations and Questions

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

What do you learn about God's will from this passage?

How would you explain to a friend why they should abstain from sexual immorality?

Look up the meaning of the word, "defraud," from verse 6. How does this word illuminate the passage?

In the context, how can the Thessalonians "excel still more"? Is Paul telling them they are not doing enough?

Why is it important to keep busy?

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Week 7

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

Observations and Questions

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

Why is there a concern for those who are “asleep?”

This passage speaks about the rapture. What are the details the passage gives, in order, about this time?

Why are the Thessalonians exhorted to be “sober” (vss. 6&8)? What would this look like?

How would you explain the day of the Lord to another person?

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Week 8

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

Observations and Questions

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

What does this passage say about how we should interact with our spiritual leaders? And what does this imply about the authority structure in the Body of Christ?

How does Paul relate to the Thessalonians in light of this teaching?

What is significant about the instruction in 14-15 on relating to different types of people?

What are the 5 positive exhortations in 16-22?

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Apply: How will I apply this to my life? Specifically, in what ways will it impact how I disciple others? Who will I share these things with?

1Thessalonians Overview

Reread the entire book of 1Thessalonians.

Look back over each section we covered. Come up with a title for each section. If you are up for it, come up with a brief outline.

What is the context and purpose of the book?

What are some themes and key words you notice throughout the book?

What are the key topics and issues addressed?

What are some of your favorite verses?

What do you learn about God and your relationship with Christ?

In what ways have you been challenged by Paul or the Thessalonians?

How will it impact the way you see and live out discipleship?

What are 1 or 2 things you want to take away and apply?