

*discover*

# 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS



LEADER GUIDE

*discover*  
**1 AND 2**  
**THESSALONIANS**



*CoffeeBreak*



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# To the Leader

## Prepare the Lesson

Bible discovery leaders help people discover together what the Bible says and means. They are not teachers but guides, facilitators, and conversation leaders.

This leader guide is meant to assist you as a small group leader by coming alongside you in your own personal work. Always answer the study guide questions first, using the suggested basic steps of preparation. Then use the leader material to enrich your understanding of the passage.

We encourage you to study ahead of time so that you do not have to rely on the leader guide during your Bible study group meeting. You don't want to give the impression that the leader guide is an answer book. The answers are in the Bible; you are a guide to help your group find the answers in God's Word.

This leader guide aims to include helpful ideas from a number of sources. Ideally you should use this information *only after* you have studied the text yourself. Read the passage and first ask your own questions. Allow God to speak to you through his Word. Look for answers in the text. What was God saying to the original readers and listeners, and what is he saying to us today? Consult the glossary if there are names and places with which you are unfamiliar.

## Get Ready to Lead

Learn to think in terms of questions. As you prepare to lead a lesson, ask yourself questions and try to discover the answers yourself. This will prepare you to anticipate group members' questions and thus help others discover truths from God's Word.

The "Conversation" boxes in the study guide are for extra questions. The text of the leader guide includes many extra questions that you may wish to use to help build the group's conversation around the text. We also suggest that you adapt the questions in the booklet or write your own questions as needed. You know the interests, personalities, and needs of your group members. You know what they will be curious about or when they will want to dig deeper into a Scripture passage. Put those extra conversation-building questions in the "Conversation" boxes and use them during your group time to help get dialogue started.

Also, encourage group members to put their own questions and discoveries in the “Conversation” boxes. By doing this, they will also be preparing for the group discussion. You might want to start a group discussion by saying, “What is in your ‘Conversation’ box? What would you like to talk about together?”

If you are able to prepare and pray thoroughly before each group session, you will be able to lead without frequent references to your notes. This will free you to be more aware of the work of the Holy Spirit during your group discussion time and to focus more effectively on your facilitation and leadership responsibilities. You will also be able to keep better eye contact and listen more carefully.

### **Lead with Questions**

Use questions to direct the group discussion. Draw out positive contributions by asking questions. Break down difficult or unclear questions with smaller, concise ones. Also use questions to respond to wrong or problematic answers. If you learn to lead others into truth by using questions, you will be a good Bible discovery leader. The questions in this study are designed to be used with the New International Version of the Bible, but other translations can also be used.

Use the comments in this leader guide to help the discovery process of your group. You are leading a conversation on the text, and you want to help guide the conversation so that group members will hear the “big ideas” from the text rather than getting bogged down in small details. Avoid using this leader material to “teach” the lesson.

**Assume that you will not use all the information supplied in this leader guide.** Ask questions that will help you get at what the text says and means. The questions in italics are the main questions. There are additional bulleted questions designed to clarify and assist in answering these main questions. The bulleted questions in bold print expand on the thoughts found in the main question, or they might simply rephrase the main question to help encourage a response from group members. *Do not feel you have to ask all of these questions.* Use only those that are helpful for your discussion. Use questions as well as comments in the leader guide only when it is helpful to guide the discussion and answer some questions that may arise. *Do not bring up information simply because you find it interesting.* Introduce it only if it will help the members of your group. In other words, tailor the questions to your particular group members. If some people in your group are new to the Bible, make

certain that you help to clarify information. But do not use extra background material that may add confusion. Feel free to delve a bit deeper with groups who may be familiar with the Bible. However, keep in mind the evangelistic purpose of this study and make certain that you are being most sensitive to members who may be new to Bible study and may not yet be believers in Christ.

Should differences of opinion arise, allow members to disagree. Your purpose is not to win arguments or even to defend a particular idea. Allow the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of your group members.

### **Help to Apply**

Ask God to guide you to ask application questions throughout the lesson when it seems appropriate for your group. As leader, pray that God will first teach you what he wants you to hear from his Word. Then ask God to guide you in helping others hear what he is saying to them. **Keep in mind that the purpose of this study is not to fill minds with facts but to change hearts as we learn what God is teaching us through his Word.**

Gently help group members discover the meaning of God's message for their own lives. Be careful not to be judgmental of persons who may not yet seem to be applying the truths you encounter together. It's the Holy Spirit's work to apply God's Word to people's hearts. Tactfully let the group know how the Spirit is applying the Word in your own heart and life. Pray faithfully for the Spirit's work in others.

While giving people the time and space to apply biblical truths as the Spirit leads them, simply try to help group members see that there is a relationship between the Bible and life. Questions for reflection at the end of each session invite everyone to take some time for personal reflection and optional sharing. Try to offer at least a few minutes for reflection time toward the end of each lesson, and encourage group members to do additional follow-up reflection at home.

# New Testament Snapshot

The New Testament is made up of 27 books focusing on the life and mission of Jesus Christ, the Savior, the King of kings and Lord of lords who is promised throughout the Old Testament. It is named the New Testament (meaning “new covenant”) because Jesus announced the beginning of a new covenant that fulfilled all the requirements of the old covenant (Old Testament), offering us salvation from sin and new life forever with God (see Matt. 5:17-18; 26:28; Luke 22:19-20).

The first four books of the New Testament are the gospel (“good news”) accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These biographical books tell the good news story of Jesus, the Son of God, who came to live among us and bring us salvation from sin. Two of the gospel writers, Matthew and John, were part of Jesus’ group of twelve closest disciples, known as the apostles (see Luke 6:13-16). Mark, attributed as the writer of the second gospel, was a young man who was part of the wider group of Jesus’ followers. Many scholars believe that Mark got much of his information about Jesus from the apostle Peter. The other gospel book was written by the historian/physician Luke, who accompanied the apostle Paul on some of his missionary journeys. The book of Acts, also written by Luke, is a historical account of the early church. The remaining books of the New Testament are letters written mainly by Jesus’ apostles to churches and individual believers.

The standard for books to be included in the New Testament was that the material had to be written by an apostle or by someone closely associated with the apostles. The apostle Paul wrote thirteen letters, and the others were written by Peter, James, John, and Jude. The author of Hebrews is unknown, but the book of Hebrews is included in the New Testament because its information is accurate and it was written by someone well known to the apostles and the early church (see Heb. 2:3). The final book, Revelation, is a letter from the apostle John to a group of churches in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), and it is called apocalyptic writing because it recounts John’s visions (revelations) of heaven and of Christ’s return at the end of time.

The letters examined in this study, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, were written by the apostle Paul to the church in Thessalonica (a city in ancient Macedonia, now a part of Greece). Paul, a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin, had trained to become a Pharisee, a devout religious leader, and he

later became a leader in the persecution of early Christians. While Paul was traveling to Damascus one day, Jesus appeared to him and changed the course of his life (Acts 9). From that point on, he followed Christ, who sent him out to be an apostle to the Gentiles (all peoples who were not Jews). Paul started many churches during his missionary journeys throughout Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia (Greece). He had the ability to reach people from all walks of life, and he followed up by writing letters to many of the churches he planted.

Paul's first and second letters to the Thessalonians were written early in his ministry, possibly while he stayed in Corinth for a year and a half (see Acts 18:1-11). Many of Paul's letters follow the same basic outline: 1. a greeting; 2. a statement of thanksgiving; 3. the main body of the letter; and 4. the closing.

# Introduction to 1 and 2 Thessalonians

The apostle Paul was fully aware of the strategic value of Thessalonica. It was the largest city in Macedonia at that time, and it had compelling historical and geographical status. Historically, Thessalonica was a “free city” in the Roman Empire because it had supported Octavian, also called Augustus (see Luke 2:1), in the battle of Philippi in 42 B.C. As a result, the Roman emperor gave it special status that included local autonomy and even the right to tax local residents. The city was named after Alexander the Great’s half-sister, Thessalonike, and for Paul it represented a cosmopolitan, multicultural center that would naturally be a challenge to the gospel.

Another significant feature was the city’s geographic location. Thessalonica had a great harbor for shipping. Located on a major east-west trade route, the city thrived from commercial enterprise. For Paul, it was a strategic entry point for spreading the Christian message throughout Macedonia, Achaia (Greece), and beyond. Today the city remains a significant presence in northern Greece and is called Thessaloniki (also Salonika).

The first lesson of this study will include some background from the book of Acts on the story of Paul in Thessalonica with his missionary companions Silas and Timothy. They brought the good news there during Paul’s second missionary journey, about twenty years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Though Paul spent only a brief period in Thessalonica, it was a fruitful time in which the local church became established. Paul continued to minister to this church through correspondence, which included the letters that we call 1 and 2 Thessalonians today.

# Glossary of Terms

**Achaia**—a Roman province that occupied the southern Peloponnesian peninsula (present-day Greece); this province included the major cities of Corinth and Athens.

**apostle**—“one sent forth.” The apostles were leaders in the early Christian church. They were chosen by Jesus to be his closest followers (Luke 6:13-16), so most of them were eyewitnesses of Jesus’ ministry and death, and he met and ate with them after his resurrection (Luke 24). Paul became an apostle after Jesus appeared to him in a vision and sent him to preach the good news to the Gentiles (Acts 9; 1 Cor. 9:1-2; 15:3-9).

**archangel**—one of the highest ranking angels. Michael is the only archangel named in Scripture (Jude 9; Rev. 12:7).

**Christ (Jesus)**—the second person of the Trinity; the name *Christ* means “Anointed One.” Jesus, the Son of God, came to save God’s people from the curse of sin and death and to give them new life forever with God. See also **Jesus (Christ)**.

**church**—(*ecclesia* in Greek) means “assembly” and refers to a group of believers who have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

**day of the Lord**—a biblical term referring to the time when Jesus Christ will return and bring an end to suffering, sin, and death, delivering his people and establishing his kingdom in the new heaven and new earth (see Rev. 21:1-5). This event is also called the second coming of Christ.

**faith**—taking God at his Word; being “sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1); trusting in Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life.

**Father**—see God the Father.

**Gentiles**—all peoples who were not Jewish by ancestry.

**glorify**—to worship or praise someone.

**God-fearing Greeks**—Gentiles who believed and worshiped the God of Israel (the Jews). Many were open to the message of Christianity.

**God the Father**—the first person of the Trinity (the second person is Jesus the Son, and the third person is the Holy Spirit). The Father sent Jesus into the world to save us from the curse of sin and death and to give us new life. The Father and Son also send the Spirit to live in us and guide us in Christlike living.

**gospel**—literally “good news.” The gospel is the good news that the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ, died and rose again for the salvation of his people and that he has ascended into heaven and will someday return to establish his kingdom.

**grace**—God’s kindness, undeserved favor, and forgiving love.

**holy kiss**—a greeting of mutual friendship in the early church.

**Holy Spirit**—the third person of the Trinity, equal to and one with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin, works true faith in believers’ hearts, comforts them, and lives with them forever.

**hope**—in combination with faith this means looking ahead in solid trust to the fulfillment of all God’s promises (Heb. 7:19; 11:1).

**Jesus (Christ)**—the second person of the Trinity; his name means “Savior.” See also **Christ (Jesus)**.

**Jews**—the people of Israel, descendants of Abraham, chosen to be a blessing to all other nations (Gen. 12:2-3).

**kingdom of God**—God’s rule over all things, especially in the lives of God’s people; often used interchangeably with “kingdom of heaven.”

**Macedonia**—a large Roman province in the first century A.D.; the section through which Paul traveled is part of present-day Greece.

**man of lawlessness**—someone who exalts himself and sets himself up over everything that represents God and the worship of God. This term may also refer to the antichrist of Revelation 13 (see also 1 John 2:18).

**Messiah**—another word for Christ, the anointed one, the promised deliverer of God’s people.

**pagan**—a word used to describe people who do not know God and are often characterized by sexual immorality (1 Thess. 4:5; see Rom. 1:24-27).

**prophecy**—the message of anyone who proclaims God’s Word. It may involve a prediction of the future.

**righteous**—anyone who is declared guilt-free by God through faith in Jesus’ redeeming work.

**salvation**—God’s gift of deliverance from sin to all who believe and trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

**sanctified**—being set apart (as holy) to serve God. This is a work of the Holy Spirit that continues throughout a believer’s lifetime.

**Silas**—a coworker of Paul who accompanied him on his second missionary journey and probably remained in Corinth when Paul left for Syria (see Acts 18:5, 18).

**Spirit**—see Holy Spirit.

**synagogue**—the meeting place for Jewish people in any town where a community of Jews might live; it was the place where rabbis taught and where people came to learn about and worship the Lord.

**Timothy**—a young companion and coworker of Paul (see Acts 16:1-3). He traveled extensively with Paul and is called his “beloved son in Christ” (2 Timothy 1:2).

# 1 Acts 17:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

## The Power of the Good News

### Getting Started

The books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians are actually letters written by the apostle Paul, who started the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey around A.D. 50. Reading a letter is much like listening to someone talking on the phone: you hear only one side of the conversation, but you can often figure out what the other person is saying. By reading these letters, we discover what Paul wanted to communicate to the church in Thessalonica. From the book of Acts we will also learn how the church in Thessalonica was founded and when this happened in the course of Paul's missionary travels.

As leader, encourage your group members to refer to the New Testament Snapshot and Introduction for helpful background information to this study.

### Opening Share Question

**When you visit a new city, what are you most interested in seeing?**

If needed, prompt group members to give examples of museums, restaurants, historical sites, and so on.

The optional share question introduces a simple idea for an “icebreaker” to help everyone get acquainted and to help put newcomers at ease. You may want to come up with your own share question, but make sure it can be answered with a word or phrase rather than a few sentences. Take care also that your share question has to do with everyday life so that anyone new to the Bible will feel as comfortable as possible.

In the lesson material that follows, the *a, b, c* questions in italics are for discussing the passage. These same questions are included in the study guide for your group members. The bulleted questions in bold print are optional. Use whichever of these questions will be helpful to the discovery process for *your* particular group. You can jot down those questions, or any others that you think would be helpful, in the “Conversation” boxes in your study guide. Group participants should also be

encouraged to write their own questions in the “Conversation” boxes in their study guides.

Some additional related Scriptures are listed at the end of each lesson (under the heading “For Further Study”). These passages are mentioned at various points in the leader’s notes for the lesson, and if you think they are helpful, you may want to discuss some of these with your group as you work through the lesson together. Some group members may also find the list of additional Scriptures helpful if they want to look up those passages at home.

## **What Does the Bible Say?**

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### **1. Acts 17:1-10**

*a. What did Paul do when he arrived in Thessalonica? What was his message?*

- **Why did Paul go to the synagogue? (See Acts 17:2.)**
- **What is a synagogue?**
- **Why might a synagogue be a good place to begin preaching?**
- **Who was the Messiah?**

Paul’s usual pattern was to go to large cities, seek out the Jewish synagogue if there was one, and bring the gospel (“good news”) to those who had been promised the Messiah (the deliverer of God’s people). If group members aren’t sure who the Jews were, note that they were descendants of the people of Israel from the Old Testament (also see glossary). The local Jewish synagogue was the place where rabbis taught and where people came to learn about and worship the Lord. If group members have questions about the synagogue and the Messiah, refer them to the glossary.

Paul’s message was a reasoned explanation of the Scriptures, demonstrating that the Messiah promised in the Old Testament would suffer and rise from the dead. Paul pointed out that Jesus had suffered and risen from the dead and was in fact the Messiah for whom the Jews had been waiting.

b. *Who was persuaded to believe his message? Make a list.*

The people at the synagogue were already practicing the Jewish religion—for some, their interest in spiritual things laid the groundwork for coming to the Christian faith. As a result, some of the Jews believed Paul’s message. The God-fearing Greeks (Acts 17:4) were people who were ethnically not Jews but had converted to the Jewish religion. Several prominent women also became believers.

c. *Why did some people oppose Paul’s message? What resulted from their opposition?*

- **Why were the opposing Jews jealous?**
- **What charges did they bring?**
- **Who else became involved?**
- **What happened to Jason? What happened to Paul and Silas?**

If the Jews in a particular city received Paul and his message, the synagogue would become a headquarters for spreading the good news of Jesus throughout the local area. Most often, however, many of the local Jews rejected the gospel, and Paul would then take his message directly to Gentiles by preaching in the city markets and other gathering places. Most of the Jews in Thessalonica did not believe Paul’s message and were jealous enough to cause trouble for Paul and his companions.

Acts 17:2 refers to Paul teaching in Thessalonica on three Sabbath days. This does not necessarily mean he was there for only a few weeks; it could have been longer, possibly even a few months. He would have stayed long enough to work for a living and also do some missionary work in neighboring communities. However long Paul was in Thessalonica, the text says that the Jews who did not believe his message became jealous. No doubt they were angry that some Jews and a number of Gentile supporters of Judaism had become Christians after hearing the good news. The opposing Jews apparently saw this as a threat to their public influence. Not willing to carry out their plan on their own, they rounded up some “bad characters” to help do it for them. They started a riot and searched for Paul and Silas but couldn’t find them.

Because of this trouble, Paul and Silas were sent away under cover of darkness to Berea. We learn later that Timothy went with them to Berea also (17:14). Their intent in Thessalonica was not to advance a political

agenda—but notice the similarity between the people’s charge against Paul and Silas and the charge leveled against Jesus before his crucifixion (John 19:12). Later Paul left Berea and traveled to Athens and then Corinth, which is probably where he wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

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## **2. 1 Thessalonians 1:1**

*Who sent this letter? Whom was it for? What is the opening greeting?*

- **What does it mean to be “in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”?**
- **What do the words “grace and peace” communicate?**
- **What is meant by “the church”?**

This letter begins the way most letters in Paul’s day would—with the names of the senders and recipients and an opening greeting. Although this letter undoubtedly reflects the thoughts and feelings of Silas and Timothy as well as Paul, it is generally accepted that Paul wrote it (see 2:18; 3:5; 5:27). Some commentators point out that Paul does not use the word “apostle” here to describe himself, as he does in his other letters. However, in this letter we see that most of the Thessalonian believers responded to Paul’s strong but loving leadership and readily accepted his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ (see 2:6-13).

Most commentaries note that the greeting “grace and peace” is related to the common Greek and Hebrew greetings of that day. In Paul’s greeting, the phrase takes on a deeper meaning, reminding readers about God’s grace and peace in the finished work of Jesus for salvation from sin.

Try to direct your group to see that the “church” in Thessalonica was not primarily a building or an institution, but a gathering of Christ’s people. It’s the same for the church in all times and places: the church is made up of people who have a special relationship with God in Christ. Some translations describe this relationship as being “in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,” while others say “belong to” instead of “in.” This relationship is close and personal and seems to be very important to the Thessalonians. Later in this study, it will become clear how the Thessalonians entered into this relationship. The “grace and peace” with which Paul greets the Thessalonians results from that relationship. Explain that your group will be discovering more of what Paul means by these terms as this study continues.

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### 3. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

*Why was Paul thankful to God for the Thessalonian believers, and how did he pray for them?*

- **What does it mean to pray continually? How might a person do that?**
- **How would it feel to hear that someone was praying for you continually?**
- **How do faith, love, and hope produce work, labor, and endurance?**

The Thessalonians must have felt specially cared for when they realized what a large place they had in Paul's prayers. Paul did not forget about them as he worked elsewhere. Notice that prayer was a top priority in Paul's life. Various translations use words like "always," "constantly," and "continuously" in this context; Paul's daily prayers included requests, but thanksgiving often came first.

Paul saw the diligent work and endurance of the Thessalonians, and he thanked God for them. It's clear that the qualities in the Thessalonians' lives showed their faith in God as well as their love and hope inspired by Christ. As your group discusses the faith, love, and hope Paul saw displayed in the lives of the Thessalonians, be sure that they do not consider these apart from their source and object: God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. However, don't think that your group has to understand the gospel fully here; other aspects about salvation will emerge as you move along in this lesson.

Look up "hope" in the glossary with your group. Your group should discover that the evidence of faith, hope, and love that Paul treasured was not isolated deeds and incidents but rather the Thessalonians' lifestyle, which included Spirit-led motivation and attitudes as well as actual deeds. Paul is evidently thankful that the Thessalonians' faith shows itself in action, that they are motivated by love, and that they are consistent in this way of life because of the sure hope they possess.

Faith, love, and hope should characterize the life of every person who has faith in Christ's sacrifice to pay for human sin. Love motivates them to do the good works that God has prepared for them to do (see Eph. 2:10). Believers have hope (assurance, certainty) in the future return

of Christ and in their eternal home with Christ. When difficulties arise, believers need endurance to continue in the work they do for the Lord.

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#### **4. 1 Thessalonians 1:4-7**

*a. How does Paul describe the Thessalonians?*

- **What does it mean to be loved by God? To be chosen? To be imitators?**

Calling the Thessalonians “brothers and sisters,” Paul describes them as being loved and chosen by God. To Paul, their response to the gospel message was evidence that they had been chosen by God. If some members of your group question the matter of being “chosen,” help them see the very positive context in which Paul refers to this concept. The fact that God was reaching out to the Thessalonians is evident in their response to the good news Paul brought. Anyone wanting to be included in the family of God is chosen. If you think it’s helpful for your group, note additionally that references to God’s sovereignty and human responsibility can be found throughout the Bible, often in parallel. Both are found in this passage as well.

*b. In what manner did Paul, Silas, and Timothy bring the message of the gospel to the Thessalonians? Refer to Acts 17:2-3 for the message Paul proclaimed.*

- **Did they bring the message only with words? Explain.**

Paul, Silas, and Timothy brought their message not only with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction. They also lived among the Thessalonians so that the new believers could see how they acted in ordinary situations on a daily basis.

*c. What was life like for those who believed Paul’s message?*

- **Whom did they imitate?**
- **What did they face?**
- **What did they model?**

The Thessalonians received the gospel message with joy given by the Holy Spirit. The “power” that accompanied the gospel message was evident not only in the way it was presented but also in the way it was

received and lived out. Apparently Paul and his companions presented the gospel in a way that surpassed human limitations. Jesus had promised his followers power by means of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Although the Thessalonian believers faced severe suffering, they followed the example of their messengers. As a result, the Thessalonian Christians became known as “examples” for the entire region. Help your group see that this radical change of lifestyle resulted from receiving, believing, and living out the gospel.

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## 5. 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10

*What were people in other regions hearing about the Thessalonian believers?*

- **Name the places to which the news traveled.**
- **What had the believers turned from, what were they waiting for, and what were they rescued from?**

If you have a map of Paul’s missionary journeys, point out Macedonia, Achaia (Greece), and the other areas covered by Paul’s missionary journeys. Apparently the experience of the Thessalonians was so remarkable that even others who had themselves experienced the miracle of grace were amazed by the Thessalonians’ responses.

Faith involves firm belief and trust and is not simply wishful thinking. The glossary describes saving faith as belief in what God has revealed in his Word and trusting in Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life. True faith is lived out in actions. The Thessalonians had turned from a life of idolatry to a life of serving the living and true God. They were an example to other believers. In this context, notice that Paul could speak of the Thessalonians imitating him and the other missionaries because he was confident that he and Silas and Timothy imitated Christ. For an additional helpful reference, see 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, which ties imitating Christ with living out your faith in everything you do.

Invite group members also to consider how we serve as examples in our everyday living, and how receiving the gospel can affect our lives:

- **Whom do we imitate, and why?**
- **Who imitates (or may imitate) us? How might this affect the way we live?**

Group members will likely think of how leaders, peers, and friends influence them, and how they in turn can influence and be examples to others, perhaps especially children and persons who are newcomers to faith in Christ. We do well to try to make sure we are witnesses who positively reflect Christ's love and example.

Regarding Paul's comments in verse 10, you may want to limit the discussion about Jesus' return at this point and assure your group that you will have more opportunity to discuss this later in this study (lesson 4). Be sensitive to group members who may struggle with the mention of God's coming wrath. If necessary, note that all who believe and trust in Jesus as Savior are already saved and kept safe in him (see Rom. 8:31-39).

## **Taking It Home**

### **Acts 17:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**

- What are the essentials of the gospel message found in these verses?*
- How do you think it would feel to be a Christian in Thessalonica and to receive the words Paul has written so far in this letter?*

Give group members an opportunity to express their thoughts. Certainly Paul's love, care, and encouragement come through in this letter to the believers in Thessalonica.

## **For Further Study**

Acts 17:14

John 19:12

Ephesians 2:10

Acts 1:8

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

Romans 8:31-39

# Prayer of Commitment

Here is a prayer of commitment recognizing Jesus Christ as Savior. If you long to be in a loving relationship with Jesus, pray this prayer. If you have already committed your life to Jesus, use this prayer for renewal and praise.

Dear God, I come to you simply and honestly to confess that I have sinned, that sin is a part of who I am. And yet I know that you listen to sinners who are truthful before you. So I come with empty hands and heart, asking for forgiveness.

I confess that only through faith in Jesus Christ can I come to you. I confess my need for a Savior, and I thank you, Jesus, for dying on the cross to pay the price for my sins. Father, I ask that you forgive my sins and count me as righteous for Jesus' sake. Remove the guilt that accompanies my sin, and bring me into your presence.

Holy Spirit of God, help me to pray, and teach me to live by your Word. Faithful God, help me to serve you faithfully. Make me more like Jesus each day, and help me to share with others the good news of your great salvation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# Bibliography

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# Evaluation Questionnaire

## *discover* 1 and 2 Thessalonians

As you complete this study, please fill out this questionnaire to help us evaluate the effectiveness of our materials. Please be candid. Thank you.

Was this a home group \_\_\_ or a church-based \_\_\_ program?

1. Was the study used for

\_\_\_ a community evangelism group?

\_\_\_ a community faith-nurture group?

\_\_\_ a church Bible study group?

2. How would you rate the materials?

Study Guide:  excellent  very good  good  fair  poor

Leader Guide:  excellent  very good  good  fair  poor

3. What were the strengths?

4. What were the weaknesses?

5. What would you suggest to improve the material?

6. In general, what was the experience of your group?

7. Other comments

Your name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_