

1 THESSALONIANS

Devotion



Winter/Spring 2025



EASTMINSTER
CHRIST-CENTERED ♦ CROSS-CULTURAL

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This devotional was written and prepared by Rev. Cheryl Lynn Khylllep for the spiritual formation of Eastminster Presbyterian Church.

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CALENDAR

JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

SMALL GROUPS

NEW MEMBER CLASS

DWELLING IN THE WORD

SPECIAL EVENT

Special Events

February 9 "Caste System in Indian Society and Its Impact" by Rev. Bala Khylllep after worship

February 16 Black History Month Special Presentation after worship

February 23 Joint worship service with Arab Church at 3:30pm

March 23 State of the Church Presentation by Rev. Dr. Aaron Teter after worship

April 27 Workshop on Creation Care by Barb and Perry Recker after worship

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

We encourage you to use this devotional booklet for personal devotions. We also hope this inspires you to participate in one of Eastminster's learning opportunities to go deeper.

Wednesday Night Small Groups: In these groups we study scripture, and we honor each other's perspectives with humility. We do this so that we may grow deeper in knowledge of God, and in our interracial and intergenerational relationships. Groups meet weekly or bi-weekly at 5:30 or 7pm. Dinner is always provided. We will be studying 1 Thessalonians and use the devotional questions found in this booklet.

Sign-up now by emailing:
ckhyll@eastminsterchurch.net



Women's Bible Study: Women have inherent value in God. This truth enables us to encourage one another in different stages of life, and strengthen us to serve God. The group is studying the Biblical basis for environmental and racial justice using the book "Let Justice Roll". **Group gathers at 6:30pm and starts study at 7pm on First Mondays.** Zoom option available.

Dwelling in the Word is a practice of listening to scripture, listening to one another and listening to the Holy Spirit. In this special devotional time we read scripture together, discuss in pairs, then share with the larger group. We will also have a time for prayer. We will have these sessions regularly at 9am when there is nothing else happening on Sunday (see calendar)

INTRODUCTION

Friends, I am so excited to study this small but insightful book of the Bible. 1 Thessalonians has the unique privilege of being the oldest book of the New Testament (really, older than the Gospels), but it often tends to be overlooked. Rafael Rodriguez, a professor from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary jokes in his book “The First Christian Letters” that Thessalonians is often treated like “junk mail” in many Christian traditions—it is there but we just don’t pay much attention to it.* While its brevity might cause some to overlook it, Thessalonians offers us the opportunity to slowly move through the scriptures with care and attention. I am excited to carefully listen with my friends in faith during small groups for God’s word revealed in this small but special book.

SHARE IN YOUR GROUP WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT 1 THESSALONIANS AND WHAT YOU HOPE TO LEARN IN THIS STUDY.

*Rafael Rodriguez’s book “The First Christian Letters: Reading 1 and 2 Thessalonians ” is an easy read and a tremendous resource if you are interested in going deeper in your learning. In each of his chapters he explores important themes of the two books such as “family” and “hospitality.”

CONTEXT

Paul came to Thessalonica, a city in Macedonia, sometime during the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius in 41-54 CE. This was during the time of Roman rule and the entire population would have been familiar with the political idea of “Pax Romana” or Roman Peace. This idea was both a hope and a declaration. The Roman leadership hoped that through world domination they could achieve “peace”, but it also declared to the population that there will be peace as long as everyone submitted to Roman power. Thessalonica was a key trading city of the time, and as such would have had an extensive variety of cults, “that included indigenous Macedonian cults like Cabirus and Dionysus, along with foreign cults like those of Isis and Serapis, and the Roman imperial cult” (Smith 677).

While the letter of 1 Thessalonians is attributed to three co-authors, Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, most commentators refer to the authorship of this letter as simply “Paul.” This is partly to simplify language and partly because Paul is viewed as the leader of this group. Yet, in our effort to be succinct in our language, we can lose sight of the fact that Paul had partners and a community in his work to share the gospel. Paul did not act alone.

DO YOU IMAGINE PAUL WORKING ALONE?
HOW WOULD THE FACT THAT PAUL HAD CO-
WORKERS CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE OF HIM
AND THE WORK HE DID?

Through a careful study of Acts and other letters attributed to Paul's authorship, it is clear that Paul felt a strong call in his life to reach beyond the Jewish tradition to Gentiles (Gentile just simply means non-Jewish). This call to serve the Gentiles, caused Paul and his team to move further and further west from Jerusalem. He even expressed ambition to go to Spain in the book of Romans. While there would have been many people belonging to the Jewish diaspora (Jewish people living outside the bounds of traditional Jewish territories) throughout the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea, this population would have decreased as Paul and his team moved westward along the coast of Europe.

Luke, the author of the gospel of Luke and Acts, gives us some historical context for Paul's visit to the Thessalonians in Acts. Keep in mind Acts would have been composed sometime after Thessalonians (it is believed to be some 30 years later) (Rodriguez 10). We read in Acts 16:8-10 Paul had a vision in his sleep while traveling in Asia Minor (Troas) which is modern day Turkey. In his dream, a Macedonian man pleaded to Paul to come to Macedonia, which was across the Thracian Sea. Faithful to this dream Paul crossed the sea and ministered to people in Philippi. While some had come to believe in Paul's testimony in Philippi, Paul was beaten and imprisoned, then escorted out of the city by the Roman authorities. From there, Paul then enters Thessalonica.

In this way, Paul and his team arrived in Thessalonica from a place of conflict in Philippi, and, according to Acts (17:1-10), they left the city because of another conflict. We learn in 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2, that while in Athens, Paul was anxious to know how things were going, therefore sent Timothy to check on the community in Thessalonica. This is thought to be weeks or months after their first visit. Timothy returned to Paul and Silas (thought to be a nickname for Silvanus, co-author of 1 Thessalonians) with great news that this new worshipping community was well and remaining faithful. It is in this good news that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy felt the inspiration to write this letter of encouragement we now know as 1 Thessalonians.

Paul and his team traveled incredibly long distances, in a time when travel would have been slow and difficult.

REFLECTING ON YOUR EXPERIENCES OF TRAVEL, DO YOU THINK TRAVELING THESE GREAT DISTANCES WOULD ENCOURAGE OR DISCOURAGE PAUL, SILAS, AND TIMOTHY'S TRUST AND FAITH IN OTHERS? WOULD IT ENCOURAGE OR DISCOURAGE THEIR FAITH AND TRUST IN GOD?

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-7

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the
Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.

2 We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you
in our prayers, constantly 3 remembering before our God and
Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of
hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 For we know, brothers and
sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our
message of the gospel came to you not in word only but also in
power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as
you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for
your sake. 6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord,
for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy from
the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the
believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

THEMES IN 1 THESSALONIANS

When reading the book of 1 Thessalonians, there are three themes and topics we need to keep in mind to enrich our reading and study.

A New People and A New Family

While Acts depicts the Thessalonian church as a mixture of Jewish and Gentile people, it seems pretty clear in this letter that the church was primarily Gentile (They turned from “idols to serve the living and true God” 1:9). This distinction as a primarily Gentile church is important to keep in mind, because Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were all considered Jewish. The authors were of a different people group than their audience. The authors recognize this, but also sought to break down differences by using metaphors of family and adoption (i.e. referring to them as brothers and sisters). Paul, Silvanus and Timothy don’t expect the church in Thessalonica to become Jewish and follow the same laws around food and social interaction, but they do welcome these Gentiles into following the living and true God revealed through the people of Israel. When we read 1 Thessalonians notice language around father, mother, and siblings. Also notice the ways the authors make room for diversity but also call the church to unity.

The Messy Middle

Paul and his co-workers, preach and proclaim in a time when Jewish thought characterized time and all of history as being divided into two: the time when evil forces rule (now), and the time (that is to come) of God's rule (678 Smith). In this way, they believed to live in a time where evil forces ruled and were anticipating God's judgement and God becoming in control. In turn, Paul and leaders of the early church felt caught between these two times—the treacherous middle ground between the two ages. Jesus had entered the world and proclaimed God's Kingdom, thus starting a new age. Yet, there is also a time to come, Jesus' "parousia" (coming, presence, arrival) that will complete the transition to the new age of God's rule. When reading 1 Thessalonians notice the authors anticipation of God's coming and struggle to be in this time of now, which is not yet of God's rule.

Experiences of Rejection

In Pauline thought, this messy middle ground of knowing the Good News but the not yet of God's complete rule is characterized by struggle particularly having experiences of rejection. Paul believes it is not a matter of if you will experience rejection, but a matter of when following the way of Jesus will lead to rejection (particularly by your own people group). Paul believes experiencing rejection is inevitable. As we read 1 Thessalonians notice how Paul talks about Jesus' rejection and his own rejection as a way of normalizing this painful experience. Also notice how the authors want the people in Thessalonica to not feel alone or isolated in their experience of rejection (Therefore redefining family and ethnic lines as we talked about above).

Look back at the reading of 1 Thessalonians 1:1-7 What words or phrases stick out to you and why? Do you see any of the themes/ topics we talked about above?

Wednesday January 29th 2025

Review the context and themes of 1 Thessalonians found in January 15th's lesson (pages 4-6, and 8-9).

This section of scripture, in many ways, is setting the stage for the teaching that can be found later in the letter of 1 Thessalonians. This passage reminds the Thessalonians of who they are as new believers and the significance of their belief, while also emphasizing the authority of the authors as proclaimers of God's "word." Since a majority of the Thessalonian Church would have been Gentile the "Word of the Lord" in verse 8 would have referred to the message of Jesus Christ not the Hebrew Scriptures.

1 THESSALONIANS 1: 8-2:12

8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. 9 For they report about us what kind of welcome we had among you and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Chapter 2

You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, 2 but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition.

1 THESSALONIANS 1: 8-2:12

3 For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, 4 but, just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals but to please God, who tests our hearts. 5 As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed, 6 nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, 7 though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. 8 So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

9 You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. 11 As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, 12 urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

1. What gives these authors authority? In other words, why should the church of Thessalonica listen to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy?
2. What should the church of Thessalonica remember? Why is it important for them to remember this?
3. In verse 7 Paul uses the metaphor of mother (or other translations say nurse or nursing mother) to depict his relationship with the Thessalonians. What does he mean by this metaphor? Why would they switch to the metaphor of father in verse 11?
4. In Chapter 3, we will read that Paul's reason for writing this letter is to encourage the church in faith and growth. How are the author's encouraging to the new worshiping community in Thessalonica through this passage?
5. When you feel discouraged or alone in your faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, how can your community of faith encourage you? How have you felt that encouragement in the past?

Wednesday February 12th 2025

Begin by going around and sharing a person or group of people you are thankful for and why.

Our passage this week emphasizes how both suffering and joy can live alongside each other. There is great suffering in experiencing rejection and being separate from each other and yet(!), there is great joy in belonging to God and a community of faith.

A warning when reading this passage: it has a hurtful and dangerous past of being used for anti-Jewish rhetoric. To avoid this pitfall, it is imperative that we keep in mind the authors of 1 Thessalonians are Jewish.

“Christian” was never a term Paul used, and he has always identified as Jewish—belonging to the tribe of Israel. As the authors recount the rejection of Jesus and his disciples, they are offering words of understanding and empathy. As the church in Thessalonica experiences rejection from their own Gentile people, Paul and his team remind them that even the savior of the world experienced rejection.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-20

13 We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God’s word, which is also at work in you believers. 14 For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you suffered the same things from your own compatriots as they did from the Jews

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-20

15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove us out; they displease God and oppose everyone 16 by hindering us from speaking to the gentiles so that they may be saved. Thus they have constantly been filling up the measure of their sins, but wrath has overtaken them at last.

17 As for us, brothers and sisters, when for a short time we were made orphans by being separated from you—in person, not in heart—we longed with great eagerness to see you face to face. 18 For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, wanted to again and again—but Satan blocked our way. 19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? 20 Yes, you are our glory and joy!

1. The idea “imitators” was common in the ancient world to mean “student” and lacks the negative connotation we often have with the word. To this audience being an “imitator” would be a great thing, because it means a student is successful when they imitate their teacher. What is the proof that the Thessalonians have been good “imitators”?
2. How is rejection from your own people group or ethnicity different than rejection from a different people group or ethnicity? Is it more painful or less?
3. The early church in Thessalonica would have experienced a radical re-shaping of their identity and sense of belonging. They went from Gentile cultic worship of a variety of gods to worshipping the “true and living God” (v. 9) made known through Jesus, a Jew from Galilee. This shift would have changed their worship of God and allegiances to groups of people. Have you ever experienced a shift in your identity and/or the group of people you understand you belong to? Please share that experience.

Wednesday February 26th 2025

In this chapter of 1 Thessalonians Paul gives some context for writing the letter and then out of a heart filled with joy informs the people of his/their prayer. The authors are praying to return to Thessalonica, that their love and faith grow, and that they remain “blameless” until the age that is to come.

Note: The word translated as “coming” in 2:19 and 3:13 is *parousia*, and tricky to translate. The word literally means “presence” and is the opposite of “absence.” So are you now wondering why it would be translated as “coming.” That is because it is often associated with the arrival of a person of authority (for example the arrival of an emperor to a city) in ancient literature.

1 THESSALONIANS 3

Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we decided to be left alone in Athens 2 and sent Timothy, our brother and God’s coworker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of your faith, 3 so that no one would be shaken by these persecutions. Indeed, you yourselves know that this is what we are destined for. 4 In fact, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we were to suffer persecution; so it turned out, as you know. 5 For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labor had been in vain.

1 THESSALONIANS 3

6 But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, just as we long to see you. 7 For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. 8 For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. 9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? 10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

11 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. 12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. 13 And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

1. What does this passage (particularly vs. 1-5) teach us about teamwork and trust?
2. In verse 5, Paul expresses anxiety that the “tempter had tempted” the people away from faith? Does this mean Paul doesn’t trust the people? Is this a healthy anxiety?
3. Paul and his team celebrate the Thessalonians faithfulness to Jesus Christ, but at the same time seek to “restore whatever is lacking in faith.” What does this teach us about faith development? (Hint: remember the movement from imitators to examples in chapter 1, and the metaphors mother to father in chapter 2) What does this teach us about our own faith development? Do you think there will always be something “lacking” from a church or individual?
4. How does the reality of Jesus’ “coming” and fulfillment of God’s kingdom affect life now in the present? Or does it?
5. Any discussion of what “persecutions” that Paul’s team and the Thessalonians faced would be pure speculation. The authors are unclear as to what kind of persecutions they and their followers are facing. But we could have a discussion about the struggles we have as a faith community as we await the completion of God’s Kingdom. What are struggles we have when following Christ in this day and age? What are temptations? What are ways we can stay “blameless”?

Wednesday March 12th 2025

This section of the letter begins a portion of exhortation from the authors on how to “walk” in faith. The word translated as “live” (v.1) and “behave” (v.12) actually are “walk” in the Greek. This section is particularly interesting as the authors of 1 Thessalonians both respect the cultural distinction of their audience, and yet, encourage them to form their lives in the way of Jesus Christ. We know from other letters that Paul did not expect Gentile believers to abide by the same customs around food and circumcision (see 1 Corinthians 7:18 and Galatians 5:2). Yet, at the same time Paul did expect new believers to be different from the culture around them.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control your own body[a] in holiness and honor, 5 not with lustful passion, like the gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and solemnly warned you.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

7 For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever rejects this rejects not human authority but God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you.

9 Now concerning love of the brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anyone write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, 10 and indeed you do love all the brothers and sisters throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, 11 to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we directed you, 12 so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and be dependent on no one.

1. As we have noted earlier in this study, the reason the authors wrote Thessalonians was to be an encouragement to this very new faith community. Do you find this section encouraging? Why or why not? Would you be encouraged by these words?
2. This passage speaks to not just how the community should behave (or walk) internally towards one another, but also externally. Name the parts of passage that are internal and the sections that deal with external. Why are both important?
3. This passage gives insight into Paul's ethics (the study of morality and how to make good choices). Based on this passage what guides Paul's decision making? How does he discern what is right and wrong?
4. Why do you suspect Paul would exhort the church on sexual ethics and doesn't see a need for the Gentile believers in Christ to change their diet or participate in circumcision?
5. The culture around sex is vastly different from the time this letter was written. As culture continues to change, and we encounter different people groups how do we make decisions about what is right or wrong? What are core values that guide our decision making?
6. What makes knowing right from wrong hard? What motivates us to do the right thing?

Wednesday March 26th 2025

Open by asking: “Were ideas about the future (including the Second Coming and/or the ‘end of the world’) prominent in your up-bringing, whether in your family or your church or your broader social environment? Did those ideas produce a sense of fear of the future?” (Rodriguez 91).

Our reading this week includes two distinct sections which both begin with the writer’s referring to their audience as brothers and sisters and ends with the exhortation to “encourage one another.” Both sections also have to do with the Jesus’ parousia (coming, presence), which will mark the fulfillment of God’s Kingdom and rule. The first section speaks to how to understand those who have died in relation to God’s Kingdom. While the second section encourages the people to stay vigilant in relation to God’s eminent Kingdom.

THESSALONIANS 4:13-5:11

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. 15 For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. 16 For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

THESSALONIANS 4:13-5:11

Chapter 5

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; 5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. 6 So, then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober, 7 for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober and put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

1. Paul's team wants this new faith community to read these words and be filled with hope. Do these words inspire fear or hope in you? Explain your answer. How can these ideas help us "encourage one another"?
2. How are these ideas in this passage similar or dissimilar from ideas you learned growing up of Jesus' return?
3. How does the understanding of Christ's eminent return impact the way faithful followers of Christ should live their lives according to this passage?
4. Paul's team saw themselves as being alive when Jesus returns ("Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together" v.16). 2,000 years later, how does this change the way we stay vigilant? What does it practically mean for us, God's faithful today?

Wednesday April 9th 2025

In our final section of 1 Thessalonians, the authors give rapid fire instruction to this budding new faith community. It is as if the writers feel short on time and space and want to make sure to say it all. You may be familiar with these words because they have been adapted many times for a traditional benediction in Christian worship. In the original Greek, there are 20 imperative verbs in 1 Thessalonians, 19 of which are in the final 5th chapter (Rodriguez 63). While a majority of 1 Thessalonians dwells on the relationship between the authors and this new church of Gentiles, this final section makes clear that faith in Jesus Christ means we do something –we don't just proclaim faith with words but also our actions.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28

But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you;

13 esteem them very highly in love because of their work.

Be at peace among yourselves.

14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters,

to admonish the idlers,

encourage the fainthearted,

help the weak,

be patient with all of them.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28

15 See that none of you repays evil for evil,
but always seek to do good to one another and to all.

16 Rejoice always,

17 pray without ceasing,

18 give thanks in all circumstances,

for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

19 Do not quench the Spirit.

20 Do not despise prophecies,

21 but test everything; hold fast to what is good;

22 abstain from every form of evil.

23 May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may
your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is
faithful, and he will do this.

25 Brothers and sisters, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss.

27 I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read
to all the brothers and sisters.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you

we carry generations



Steve Prince

Neighbors | Ink on paper | By Steve Prince
A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

1. In this long list of instructions, which stands out to you as the most encouraging? Why? Which instruction do you find the most surprising? Why?
2. Many of these imperatives are easier said than done. Do you think the church can really accomplish these instructions? What would make following these words difficult?
3. Look at the image on page 27. Take some time in silence to gaze at the image. What do you notice? What part gets your attention the most? How does this image relate to 1 Thessalonians (you can read the artist statement on page 29)?
4. What have you learned in this study? What new idea or perspective do you want to hold onto?

Neighbors | Ink on paper | By Steve Prince

Each individual carries generations within them, made up of billions of people who have occupied this earth before us. We have an individual and collective responsibility to be good stewards (Good Samaritans) of our bodies, neighbors, and communities, rooted in love. Every day we make a dance of life and death—celebrating the entrance and exit of life, the progression of age and maturity, and the expansion of our tent, grafting to people who share our blood and our beliefs. We are the structures, those temporal buildings that weather the storms, that creak and wither away daily, but are fortified by our relationships to each other and with the sharing of the good news planted by the Heavenly Father. This dance is an open profession of our vow to live by God’s commandments and find a way to collectively preserve the truth of our origin while moving as one communal body into an untouched future.

—Steve Prince

Works Cited

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Come away with your church community for a time to worship and learn. This will be a time together to strengthen our relationships, so that we may serve and witness to our communities back home.

