

A STUDY OF I THESSALONIANS

Getting Ready **For the Second Coming**



A PUBLICATION OF RAY REYNOLDS RAP

BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

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Getting Ready for the Second Coming

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INTRODUCTION

Author:

Paul, the apostle (**I Thessalonians 1:1**), formerly Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 8-9**) identifies himself as the author of this letter. He uses Silas (Silvanus) and Timothy to aid him with the writing. The early church unanimously accepted it as from Paul and quoted it often.

Date:

It is generally accepted that Paul wrote it around 49-51 AD in the city of Corinth. There is little doubt that this letter was one of the earliest letters that Paul wrote, and it may be the first, depending on the date of Galatians. It was written during the second missionary journey when he was accompanied by Silas (**Acts 15:22**) and just a few months after they had established the congregation in Thessalonica (**Acts 17:1-9**).

The book of Acts reveals that the missionaries reasoned with those in the synagogue for three Sabbaths before having success. They probably only stayed in Thessalonica for a few months and then went on to Berea (**Acts 17:10**), Athens (**Acts 17:15**), and eventually Corinth (**Acts 18:1**). While in Athens, Paul sent Timothy back to visit the brethren in Thessalonica and then met up with him in Corinth where he got the report and then wrote this letter.

Theme:

This letter is about preparing for the second coming of Jesus. Since Paul's stay in Thessalonica was brief he didn't have time to describe all the aspects of living a holy life and how to anticipate for the Lord's coming. The church was still struggling with immorality and weak faith at this time.

The latter part of this letter has been the subject of much study and debate. Paul, while attempting to encourage the brethren (**I Thessalonians 4:18**), apparently he opened up a "can of worms" regarding the end times and would have to clarify more in a second letter. In this first letter he tells of the resurrection of the righteous dead and the "changing" of those alive when Christ comes again (**I Thessalonians 4:13ff**). Paul does not address when this would take place, except to give the impression it would happen suddenly. He taught that Christ would come as a "thief in the night" (**I Thessalonians 5:2**) but no one knew when this would happen (**Matthew 24:36, 25:13**).

Audience:

The church of Thessalonica was the intended audience. Thessalonica was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. Its inhabitants were Roman citizens who were ruled by officials known as "politarchs" (**Acts 17:6-8**). Remember that Paul was called to do missions here. Aristarchus and Secundus (of Thessalonica) were believers that labored with him (**Acts 20:4, 27:2**).

Key Verses:

I Thessalonians 1:2, 1:5, 2:6-7, 2:12, 3:9-10, 3:13, 4:3, 4:11, 4:13-18, 5:2-6, 5:9, 5:17-19

Outline:

The Condition of the Church (I Thessalonians 1)

- A Practical Church (vs.1-4)
- A Graceful Church (v. 5)
- A Spiritual Church (vs. 6-7)
- A Faithful Church (vs. 8-10)

The Conduct of the Church (I Thessalonians 2)

- Integrity of Heart (vs. 1-4)
- Honesty in Speech (vs. 5-9)
- Maturity in Reception (vs. 10-13)
- Stability in Suffering (vs. 14-20)

The Concern for the Church (I Thessalonians 3)

- Be Encouraged, Not Tormented (vs. 1-3)
- Be Strengthened, Not Tempted (vs. 4-5)
- Be Delighted, Not Traumatized (vs. 6-10)
- Be Established, Not Troubled (vs. 11-13)

The Comfort of the Church (I Thessalonians 4)

- The Need for Holy Learning (vs. 1-8)
- The Need for Humble Love (vs. 9-10)
- The Need for Honorable Labor (vs. 11-12)
- The Need for Hopeful Living (vs. 13-18)

The Calling of the Church (I Thessalonians 5)

- Walk in the Night Light (vs. 1-8)
- Walk in the New Mindset (vs. 9-11)
- Walk in the Noble Way (vs. 12-22)
- Walk in the Notable Calling (vs. 23-28)



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LESSON #1 = The Condition of the Church

Text: I Thessalonians 1

Introduction: What do you pack when you take a trip? How many bags do you need? What are the contents of your suitcase? It is evident from **Acts 1:9-11** that Jesus ascended into heaven. Before that ascension He made a promise that He would come back again to receive the saints when the time is right (**John 14:1-6**). What does that promise mean to us? We know that Jesus is coming again but what must we do about it? We need to get our (spiritual) bags packed! We can go over that checklist every Lord's Day (**I Corinthians 11:17-34**) and remind ourselves of our upcoming departure (v.26). One thing we need to focus on is our current spiritual condition (**I Thessalonians 1**). It's hard to travel when we are sick or unhealthy. How's your spiritual condition? What do you need to do to prepare? Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. A Practical Church (vs.1-4)

¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

II. A Graceful Church (v.5)

⁵For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

III. A Spiritual Church (vs.6-7)

⁶And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

IV. A Faithful Church (vs.8-10)

⁸For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. ⁹For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Conclusion: Have you started preparing for His second coming? Are you getting your bags packed? Why would you wait until the last minute? One way we can get prepared is to walk with those who are also getting ready. And we need to remember those who have made the journey. A good friend once said, "Yesterday is but a dream. Tomorrow is only a vision. But today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope. No one can predict the future, but everyone can adequately prepare for whatever the future might bring. For it is today that preparation is made for tomorrow." Are you ready to meet Jesus? If not, make things right today!



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LESSON #2 = The Conduct of the Church

Text: I Thessalonians 2

Introduction: It is evident from **Acts 1:9-11** that Jesus ascended into heaven. However, before that ascension, He made a promise that He would come back again for the saints (**John 14:1-6**). What does that promise mean to us? We know that Jesus is coming again but what must we do about it? We need to get our (spiritual) bags packed! One thing we need to focus on is our conduct (**I Thessalonians 2**). It's easier to travel when know the culture. How's your spiritual conduct? Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Integrity of Heart (vs.1-4)

¹For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. ²But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. ³For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. ⁴But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

II. Honesty in Speech (vs.5-9)

⁵For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. ⁸So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. ⁹For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

III. Maturity in Reception (vs.10-13)

¹⁰You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, ¹²that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. ¹³For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

IV. Stability in Suffering (vs.14-20)

¹⁴For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, ¹⁵who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, ¹⁶forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. ¹⁷But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. ¹⁸Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. ¹⁹For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? ²⁰For you are our glory and joy.

Conclusion: Have you started preparing for Jesus to come again? His second coming is imminent. Are you getting your (spiritual) bags packed? We can get better prepared for the trip by walking with others who are also getting ready. We also need to remember those who have made the journey before us (**Hebrews 11-12**). Don't wait until the last minute to get things in order! Change your conduct while you still have the time. Are you ready to meet Jesus? If not, make things right today!



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LESSON #3 = The Concern of the Church

Text: I Thessalonians 3

Introduction: It is evident from **Acts 1:9-11** that Jesus ascended into heaven. However, before that ascension, He made a promise that He would come back again for the saints (**John 14:1-6**). What does that promise mean to us? We know that Jesus is coming again but what must we do about it? We need to get our (spiritual) bags packed! We need to think about what really concerns us (**I Thessalonians 3**). It's hard to travel with distractions. What hinders you in this journey? Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Be Encouraged, Not Tormented (vs.1-3)

¹Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, ²and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, ³that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.

II. Be Strengthened, Not Tempted (vs.4-5)

⁴For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. ⁵For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

III. Be Delighted, Not Traumatized (vs.6-10)

⁶But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you— ⁷therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. ⁸For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. ⁹For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, ¹⁰night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

IV. Be Established, Not Troubled (vs.11-13)

¹¹Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. ¹²And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, ¹³so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

Conclusion: Have you started preparing for Jesus to come again? His second coming is imminent. Are you getting your (spiritual) bags packed? We can get better prepared for the trip by walking with others who are also getting ready. We also need to remember those who have made the journey before us (**Hebrews 11-12**). Don't wait until the last minute to get things in order! Remove the distractions that hinder you from focusing on what really matters. Be saved now while you can enjoy this life and appreciate the next. Are you ready to meet Jesus? If not, make things right today!



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LESSON #4 = The Comfort of the Church

Text: I Thessalonians 4

Introduction: The Bible teaches us in **Acts 1** that Jesus ascended into heaven. In **John 14** He made a promise that He would come back again to receive the saints. But what does that mean? What can we do about it? We need to get our bags packed! Today we are going to focus on our comfort. Specifically, we are going to focus on words that can comfort us. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. The Need for Holy Learning (vs.1-8)

¹Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ²for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. ⁷For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

II. The Need for Humble Love (vs.9-10)

⁹But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; ¹⁰and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more.

III. The Need for Honorable Labor (vs.11-12)

¹¹that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, ¹²that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

IV. The Need for Hopeful Living (vs.13-18)

¹³But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Conclusion: This last verse of chapter three started leading us to this great and glorious conclusion. Paul wants everyone who is alive, and remaining on the earth, to prepare for a homecoming with Christ and the resurrected Saints. We should keep our eyes on the sky. We need to keep our ears open to the sound of the trumpet. We need to live right so He will call our name. We don't want to miss what He has prepared for us! Are you ready to meet Jesus? If not, make things right today!



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LESSON #5 = The Calling of the Church

Text: I Thessalonians 5

Introduction: God does not make mistakes. He has called the saints for service. We have discussed the importance of packing our spiritual bags, and preparing for eternity, over the last four weeks. We are studying through the first letter to the Thessalonians. We have focused on our condition, our conduct, our concerns, and the words we need for comfort. In this final chapter Paul addresses the eternal calling of God. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Walk in the Night Light (vs.1-8)

¹But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ²For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

II. Walk in the New Mindset (vs.9-11)

⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

III. Walk in the Noble Way (vs.12-22)

¹²And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. ¹⁵See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. ¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies. ²¹Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

IV. Walk in the Notable Calling (vs.23-38)

²³Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. ²⁵Brethren, pray for us. ²⁶Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. ²⁷I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren. ²⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Conclusion: Have you started your journey? Are you preparing yourself for the Lord to call you home? It is important to remember that no one else can pack your spiritual bags for you. You have to do that yourself. If you are hearing/reading these words... you still have time. However, your time is quickly running out. If you are not ready to meet Jesus, please make things right today! Believe in Jesus. Confess His name. Be baptized into His blood. And walk worthy of your calling in Christ.