

1 THESSALONIANS

STUDY QUESTIONS

A Bible Study for Women

Precious women of God,

How exciting that you have chosen to plunge into a study of the very rich treasure of God's Word! May God be pleased to conform you more into the image of His Son as you dwell on and apply to your lives this section of Scripture. These study questions are designed to get you thinking carefully and deeply about the book of 1 Thessalonians. They are not already broken up into assignments for each day of the week; however, I would recommend that you approach this material in a certain way:

1. Begin your study time each day by reading the entire chapter that we are studying for that week.
2. Answer several of the questions daily, giving thought and meditation to each one, so that you are able to discuss them more thoroughly and be better equipped when you meet.
3. Take the time once a week to read through the entire book in one sitting, so as to gain an overview of the book as a whole and not get lost in the details of that one chapter.
4. Though the questions may be able to be answered all in one or two days, try to make the time to spend on it 5 or 6 days a week so that you are able to more slowly ponder each one, rather than rushing through.
5. Come to your study time ready to be involved! Feel free to ask any questions you may have had when reading, or expound upon anything you thought as you read and answered the questions. You will gain the most from your time together as you all participate. Don't be intimidated or feel silly about any questions or comments you might have. We all have much yet to learn, and we all learn from one another! Trust the Lord your group to be a safe place where you can have confidence and be yourself.

I do recommend printing these out, hole punching them, and putting them into a three-ring binder or bradded folder. (I've also included a cover page you may use if you like). Then you can keep all the notes together from all the weeks, and in the end you will have a resource from which hopefully you can continue to glean in the future as you read and re-read this wonderful book!

Again, I'm so glad you have chosen to participate, and I pray that God might meet with you in significant ways as you fellowship and share with one another your thoughts and questions about 1 Thessalonians.

With joy in our coming Savior,

Jill Hamilton

1 THESSALONIANS STUDY QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1

A little background to keep in mind: Thessalonica was a city with a natural harbor located in a well-traveled north-south area called the Egnatian Way. It was also positioned along a key trade route from north to south, making it a bustling center for trade and philosophy. The population consisted of both Greeks and Jews. Allow this to inform you as you read the text and answer the questions

1:1

As you read the greeting from Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy, does anything stand out to you about what is said? To whom is the letter addressed?

How is the church identified here, and what is significant about that?

1:2

We discover in this verse Paul's gratitude for the people to whom he is writing, evidenced by his fervency and constancy in prayer for them. Do you zealously pray for those with whom you have shared the gospel and discipled?

If prayer is a strong area in your life, would you note here and come prepared to share with the rest of us ways in which you have been helped to effectively and consistently pray for others and in general? Are there specific tools that have been helpful to you?

1:3

What are the three things listed here that drive Paul's prayers for the Thessalonians?

Is there anything significant about these three things mentioned? Do you know of any other Scriptures in which these three things appear together?

Let's note what is said here about the Thessalonians' faith, hope, and love. Dwell for a minute on the words which Paul chose related to their faith, their love, and their hope. What might "work of faith" mean?

What do you think was in Paul's mind as he penned the words "labor of love?"

Be encouraged and challenged by what Thomas notes in The Expositor's Bible Commentary: that the word "labor" connotes "extraordinary work expended. Coupled with the product of faith, therefore, is the wearisome toil by which love expends itself. So great is its concern for the object that love does not stop with ordinary effort, but goes the second mile and even beyond for the sake of another."

What about "steadfastness of hope?" Elaborate on what this could mean, and note the content and cause for their hope as you meditate on this phrase.

1:4

The word "for" is an explanatory word. Here Paul explains the reason behind their faith, love, and hope. What is the reason he gives?

1:5-8

How does Paul know that the Thessalonians have been chosen by God? What evidence does he list here?

Paul's confidence in the Thessalonians is grounded in their response but also in the authority of the messengers. Why does the authority of the messenger matter?

Is what way were the Thessalonians like Paul and Jesus? (v. 6)

Why do you suppose this characteristic had such a great influence in the region in which they lived?

Take a minute to look up on a map in the back of your Bible or elsewhere to see where exactly Macedonia and Achaia are located. Note mentally that the distance between those two areas is about 200 miles—quite a distance for that day.

Harkening back to two questions ago, is there an area of your life right now that needs to look more like Paul, Jesus and the Thessalonians in this way?

What does this joy in affliction look like? We know it's not merely putting on a happy face and acting like all is well, so what is it?

1:9-10

In these verses, what are the three verbs that describe what the Thessalonians did when they became Christians? These words make up a nice summary of what happens to all of us when we embrace Christ.

There is also a continuing aspect, of course, to these actions being lived out in the lives of Christians. How well are you doing at crucifying you flesh and turning from idols on a regular basis?

The Thessalonians would have come out of worshiping the gods of the Greco-Roman pantheon as well as the imperial cult and some Egyptian gods. Are you aware of the idols in your life? If not, take a moment to ask the Lord to reveal to you if you are worshiping something other than the living and true God as you progress in the faith. Then confess that sin to Him.

Verse 9 also says the Thessalonians turned to *serve* God. How are you demonstrating your faith in the living and true God by serving His church and those outside His church? Is there anything He is calling you to do that you have not obeyed? Are there ministries (big or small) you need to be involved in that

you have neglected? Does your life consist of regular service to others, or mainly about others serving you?

Enjoy this quote from William Carey's journal from March 29, 1794: "O what is there in all the world worth living for but the presence and service of God—I feel a burning desire that all the world may know this God and serve Him."

The Thessalonians are also said in v. 10 to be *waiting* for the Lord's return. Do you view your earthly life now in this same way? Do you long for his appearing, as 2 Timothy 4:8 says?

What exactly does this waiting look like? We typically think of waiting as a passive thing. Is God calling us to something active or passive when he holds before us the inspiration to wait and long for the return of His Son? What other Scriptures come to mind as we ask ourselves this question?

If we don't consider ourselves to have a very eternal perspective on this life, what can we do to improve in this area? Are there ways in which we can increase our zeal for His impending return, that we might be found more faithful, more prepared, and with our hearts more passionately focused on Him?

CHAPTER WRAP-UP

What does this first chapter teach us about the character/nature of God?

What do we learn in this chapter about humanity?

Does the author seem to be emphasizing anything in the chapter through repetition? If so, what?

In two sentences or less, summarize the contents of this chapter.

1 THESSALONIANS STUDY QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 2

Begin by taking a few minutes to read Acts 16:19-39. It gives us some background on Paul's experiences in Philippi and sheds light on the verses we are about to read. List out some things Paul and Silas endured from their persecutors.

2:1

This chapter begins with the word "for." This tells us that there is a connection between the content of the previous verses and what is coming. I believe we should see a link between 2:1 and 1:9. Just as those in other regions report that the Thessalonians received Paul and his companions well, their reception was due to the fact that they knew Paul and Timothy to have been trustworthy there. Apparently some in Thessalonica were spreading lies about the missionaries' character, and Paul felt need to defend himself in this letter.

2:2

What examples Paul and Timothy are to us of boldness in the face of persecution! To have gone through what they did and then immediately return to preaching the same gospel that brought their suffering shows a depth of courage that could only come from our great God.

Now is a good time to recall that God tells us that "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (2 Tim. 3:12) If we have not experienced it yet, we will. If we have not suffered persecution to this point, why might that be? Are we putting ourselves in situations in which we have interactions with unbelievers? When we are with those of the world, are we living in such a way that we are testifying boldly to the truth of the gospel? What are some ways, big or small, right where I am, in the season of life I am in, that I can testify to others of God's indescribable gift of Jesus to the world?

2:3-6

This is a passage in which Paul is defending his ministry. Apparently he has been criticized, and untrue rumors have been spread, which he is eager to dispel.

What does he list in these verses as being motives that did NOT characterize his ministry?

2:7-8

This verse begins with a “but.” Let us always notice our little words that tip us off to connections between verses. Sometimes these tiny words make all the difference in understanding a passage. “But” is a contrast word. What is Paul contrasting here?

Describe the conduct and character of the missionaries among the Thessalonians. See also v. 11.

What do these verses tell us about true teachers versus false teachers?

What does v. 8 in particular speak to us about our own personal conduct with others? Are we in reality more inclined to quickly dispense the gospel and then get back to our own lives as fast as possible?

Take a couple of minutes to think on the following verses and quotations:

- “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, that you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)
- Paul said in Philippians 2:17, “Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.”
- “We do not make converts. We are called to make disciples, ‘little Christs,’ who observe all His teachings... A ‘hit & run’ approach to missions and ministry will fail to accomplish this. Short-term endeavors, though commendable and valuable, are no substitute for those who give years, even the rest of their lives, to teach others who can teach others who can teach others.”ⁱⁱ

2:9-12

Here still Paul is defending his conduct among the Thessalonians in his previous time with them in order to prove the authenticity of his message.

In v. 9 Paul explains how he received his wages outside of ministry work so that he might not burden them financially. Is this meant as an example for all in ministry to follow? If so, why? If not, why not? Back up your thoughts with Scripture.

v. 12

What actions of God are mentioned in this verse? Why do you suppose it's these rather than other actions of His that Paul brings up?

Notice future focus of this verse. At the end of chapter 1, Paul points us toward the future in mentioning our waiting for Jesus' return, and chapter 4 will also address in detail the future return of the Lord. We are able to see that a significant theme in this book is the future return of our Lord.

2:13

Here we find further proof that Paul's gospel is the true gospel. The people believed and began living it. What is testified here about God's Word? The Word WORKS in us. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us, "The Word of God is LIVING and ACTIVE and sharper than any two-edged sword."

2:14

"For" tells us HOW the Word was working in these believers. What did it produce in them?

Turn to Acts 17 and read verses 1-10 to get a better idea of what the Judean believers endured.

2:15-16

How, specifically, did the persecutors "oppose God and all mankind?"

What is our hope in situations like these? (v. 16)

The tense of the verb in this verse makes it sound as though God's wrath had been poured out already in that day. Though it's possible that Paul was referring to a time of judgment current to that day, he likely was referring to the future day of wrath at Christ's return, which had already been inaugurated in some part. What things in your life make you long for this day? What wrongs do you long to see made right?

2:17-20

What are Paul's feelings toward the Thessalonians?

Why do you suppose he felt so strongly for them?

2:18

With Paul's belief in God's sovereignty, why do you think he gives Satan the credit for hindering their return?

2:19-20

In what way are the Thessalonians Paul's boast and joy?

Galatians 6:14 says, "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Why is it not Christ's work alone that is his boast? How do we reconcile 2:19 with this verse?

William Carey wrote, "What a heaven it will be to see the myriads of poor heathens...who by their labors have been brought to the knowledge of God. Surely a 'crown of rejoicing' like this is worth aspiring to. Surely it is worthwhile to lay ourselves out with all our might in promoting the cause and kingdom of Christ."ⁱⁱⁱ

CHAPTER WRAP-UP

What does this second chapter teach us about the character/nature of God?

What do we learn in this chapter about humanity?

Does the author seem to be emphasizing anything in the chapter through repetition? If so, what?

In two sentences or less, summarize the contents of this chapter.

1 THESSALONIANS STUDY QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 3

3:1

“Therefore” tells us the cause of something. What is Paul explaining here?

Paul’s affection for the Thessalonian believers is clearly massive. Examine your own heart. How deep is your love for the brethren? Is this an area in which God would be challenging you to grow? If so, what can you do to prioritize growth in this area?

3:2-3

For what purpose did Paul send Timothy? What did Paul’s main concern for them seem to be? (see also vv.4-5)

In v. 3, the “for” in the second half of the verse explains something. What is Paul telling us? What are we/they “destined for?” See the next verse as well for further insight.

Look up Acts 9 where Saul was converted, and read that passage. What did God tell Ananias that Paul would have to experience?

Philippians 1:29 also reveals to us this same plan of God for Christians: “For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.”

Why would a kind and loving God purpose for his people to suffer? Use God’s Word to explain your understanding of this difficult idea.

3:5

Paul was concerned about how this suffering might be impacting his disciples in Thessalonica. Temptation does come alongside affliction, doesn't it? At the very least, we are tempted to complain. At the worst, we might be tempted to leave the faith. What affliction(s) are you enduring right now that is bringing temptation in your life? (big or small) How are you handling it?

What is the most effective way you have found to fight temptation and persevere in the faith when times get hard?

If we open our eyes and ears to the world around us, we will see that at least to some degree, Christians are beginning to experience persecution here in America. It used to be something we would only read about that took place in other countries, but it's not now hard to imagine pastors being jailed or fined for hate speech even here. Christians are viewed as unloving and intolerant and are portrayed that way by others. We can even point to instances in which conservative groups are actually being targeted for mistreatment. Dr. Al Mohler recently predicted that the day is coming when religious groups will lose their privileges they've enjoyed, and churches across the land will have to close their doors because they will no longer be able to afford the property taxes.

With the potential for the advent of this kind of persecution and even worse coming our way, what can we do to ensure that we stand and not fall as believers? (*1 Cor. 10:12: "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."*)

3:6

The "but" shows us a contrast. What is contrasted here?

3:8-9

Paul gains confidence which overflows in exultant thanksgiving to God when he knows his disciples are continuing in the faith. Do we care this much about others? Is our spirit in a state of unrest until we know that those are discipling/have disciplined are continuing to do well spiritually?

3:10

Paul mentions desiring to “supply what is lacking” in the faith of the believers there. The *ESV Study Bible* note (p. 2308) explains that because Paul had to leave Thessalonica earlier than planned and wished, he was unable to complete his full instructions to the church there, and he longs to return and finish the teaching.

3:11-12

What is Paul praying here for the Christians?

Why do you think Paul might be encouraging them toward an increase in love when he clearly has already praised them for being so loving previously (in chapter 1— their “labor of love,” etc.)?

3:13

What other desire for the Thessalonian church does Paul express here? What is the ultimate purpose of our love for one another? How does this connect with what we have already seen in the book?

God is always working in us to conform us to the image of Christ, that He might have a pure bride at Jesus’ coming. How concerned are you for that kind of holiness? Do you strive with all your being to live in a way that is “blameless in holiness?”

As we come to the end of this chapter, let us think on these quotes from Jim Elliott’s journals: “I covenanted with my Father that He would do either of two things—either glorify Himself to the utmost in me, or slay me. By His grace I shall not have His second best. For He heard me, I believe, so that I now have nothing to look forward to but a life of sacrificial sonship or heaven soon. Perhaps tomorrow. What a prospect!”

A few days later he wrote, “Son of Man, I feel it would be best if I should be taken now to Thy throne. I dread causing Thee shame at Thy appearing. Father, take my life, yea, my blood if Thou wilt, and consume it with Thine enveloping fire. I would not save it, for it is not mine to save. Have it, Lord, have it all. Pour out my life as an oblation for the world.”²⁶

CHAPTER WRAP-UP

What does this third chapter teach us about the character/nature of God?

What do we learn in this chapter about humanity?

Does the author seem to be emphasizing anything in the chapter through repetition? If so, what?

In two sentences or less, summarize the contents of this chapter.

1 THESSALONIANS STUDY QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 4

4:1

Paul urges the Thessalonians to continue in the faith and in good works. Note the similarity of this language to that of 3:12 and also of 4:10. Why do you suppose they (and we) need to be urged on so?

4:2

What does Paul give here (notice the “for”) as the way in which they were to continue and abound in faithfulness? (The answer is somewhat implied in this verse).

What for us is the equivalent today of holding to the instructions given from the Lord Jesus through Paul?

4:3

I love the simplicity and clarity of this verse. Paul lays out for us the answer to a question so many people have all the time. What does he state is God’s will for believers?

4:4-8

Paul now addresses a specific area of Christian living—sexual purity. Why would Paul need instruct them on such a basic part of sanctification when the Thessalonians seem to be further along in maturity, given all we’ve encountered about them thus far?

What are at least three reasons Paul gives for abstaining from sexual immorality?

What does it show if someone rejects a life of personal holiness? Many in our culture would claim to be Christians, but their lives (and oftentimes specifically their sexual lives) would not be characterized by holiness. Is living in this contradiction an option for true believers?

How would you explain to a new believer using these verses that sexual purity is imperative for pleasing God?

Soak in these words from John Piper: “Here is our witness to the world: The risen Christ is your king and has absolute, unlimited authority over your life. If you do not bow and worship him and trust him and obey him, you commit high treason against Christ the King, who is God over all. The resurrection is God’s open declaration that he lays claim on every person and tribe and tongue and nation...Your sex life is his to rule; your business is his to rule; your career is his to rule; your home is his; your children are his, your vacation is his, your body is his; He is *God!* So if you resist his claim, feel no admiration for his infinite power and authority, and turn finally to seek satisfaction from thrills that allow you to be your own master, then you will be executed for treason in the last day. And it will appear so reasonable and so right that you should be executed for your disloyalty to your Maker and Redeemer that there will be no appeals and no objections. Your life of indifference to the risen Christ and of half-hearted attention now and then to a few of his commandments will appear on that day as supremely blameworthy and infinitely foolish, and you will...weep that you did not change.”^v

God takes sexual immorality very seriously. Do you? What are you doing to ensure that you remain sexually pure? What measures are you taking to protect the purity of your marriage? Are there ways in which you have grown lax and need to once again take steps to ensure the purity of your union? If you are single, how are you living out this radical purity to which we are called?

What is the Lord said to be in verse 6—in these matters? _____

What strong language! How deeply we ought to fear our God.

4:10

This phrase “more and more” is quite reminiscent of 3:12 in which Paul exhorts them to “increase and abound” in love for one another. I am reminded of the verse that warns us not to grow weary in doing good. (Galatians 6:9) It’s easy to go through seasons of doing well at loving the church but then slip back into selfish living, isn’t it?

4:11

What does it mean to “live quietly?” According to the *ESV Study Bible* note, it stands in contrast to meddling in others’ affairs. We can see also 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12 where it says, “For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.”

Proverbs 14:23 instructs us that “in all toil there is profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.”

Is your life characterized by hard work? In our culture, in many ways we have more free time than did past generations. How wisely are you using your time? How closely does your use of time on social media in particular (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.) reflect your love for Christ? Could anyone describe you as a busybody?

4:12

What is the reason given here for the Thessalonians to live quietly, mind their own affairs, and work with their hands? (As we read, we ought always to notice all the small connective words like “so that).”

Paul indicates that it was preferable for the Thessalonians to not be dependent on people financially. How does this fit together with what is described in Acts chapter 2, where the believers are sharing all they have and being praised for doing so?

It’s helpful for our understanding to point out once again what a note from the *ESV Study Bible* contributes here: “For some Christians to be shamelessly exploiting the charity of wealthier Christians would have been disgraceful in a first-century Greco-Roman environment.”

Toward the end of v. 12, we see the word “walk,” which also appeared back in 4:1. “Walking” represents the everyday living of the Christian life. Whom, according to these two verses, do we walk before? How does this relate to Jesus’ teaching on the “first and greatest commandment” and the “second like it” in Matthew 22:37-39?

4:13-17

Paul seems to be giving a new body of teaching here. He wrote to inform them regarding specific questions they had, which apparently Paul did not have the time to cover when he was with them in person.

4:13

“Asleep” is a euphemism for “dead” here. The Thessalonians believed something about death which Paul needed to address through his teaching. Their misunderstanding was causing them to grieve hopelessly.

4:14

The “for” here tips us off that Paul is explaining something. What is it?

4:14-15

What is Paul teaching here about what will happen to those who have already died when Jesus returns?

About what, apparently, were the Thessalonians concerned, which was causing them to grieve without hope?

To what, therefore, shall we cling, in order to have hope and not despair during times of bereavement?

How dear is the resurrection in your heart? Oftentimes in our circles, we hear emphasized the *death* of Jesus, but the *resurrection* doesn't get as much attention. The bodily resurrection of believers gets even less didactic attention. Take a couple of minutes to look up and dwell on 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 and even the verses following them. According to Scripture, how significant ought Christ's resurrection, and therefore ours, be to our lives here and now?

4:15

“by a word from the Lord” Paul probably received a direct personal revelation from God about this.

4:16-17

Lay out the order of events here that Paul is revealing to his audience. What were they (and we) to learn about Jesus' return?

4:18

Always ask yourself when studying God's Word, “What is the ‘therefore’ there for?” Explain your understanding of the connection between verses 17 and 18.

How *encouraged* are you when you think on this body of doctrine? Does the study of eschatology comfort you and bring you joy? Or does it feel more or less dry to you? Paul wants this end-times teaching to produce *encouragement* in his readers, as indicated in this verse. Take a minute to meditate on what it will really be like for Christ to return and for us to be with Him face to face. Let your mind and heart revel in those thoughts. If you feel apathetic, confess that to God and ask Him to reveal Himself in all His beauty to you and cause your heart to swell with anticipation of His Son's return and the immeasurable joy we will have in seeing Him.

CHAPTER WRAP-UP

What does this fourth chapter teach us about the character/nature of God?

What do we learn in this chapter about humanity?

Does the author seem to be emphasizing anything in the chapter through repetition? If so, what?

In two sentences or less, summarize the contents of this chapter.

1 THESSALONIANS STUDY QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 5

5:1-3

The “day of the Lord” is a phrase used in the Old Testament and refers to the time in which God will return to earth to judge the evil, unbelieving people and save the faithful whose trust is in Him.

There are two analogies given here that describe what this day will be like. What are they, and what do they have in common?

What is being explained here by these similes? What will this day of the Lord be like?

Verse three harkens back to Jeremiah, which we heard preached recently, where the Israelites were unwisely and wrongly assuming their exclusion from any judgment of God. In the same way, the Thessalonians and others of that day were incorrectly believing that they were exempt from any wrath. Do you see any evidence of this same kind of thinking in our culture today? If so, what?

5:4

“But” is a contrast word. What is being contrasted here?

5:5

The “for” gives us an explanation of the previous verse. What does it mean that the Thessalonians are “children of light” or “children of the day?” What other verses throughout Scripture use similar imagery and can inform us about the meaning of these phrases?

How many categories of people are mentioned here? _____ There is no in between. With this in mind, what can we do to be a voice in our world for the truth of the Lord's return? Ezekiel was a watchman for the Israelites to deliver the message of God's impending judgment. God told him that their blood would be on his hands if he were not to be faithful to deliver the prophetic message. Are we being faithful where God has put us? Are you opening your mouth as there is opportunity? Are you seeking to create opportunities where there are none? What does your awareness of this impending destruction drive you to do?

Be inspired by William Carey's passion for the lost which moved him to missionary work:

"I care not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls for Christ. While I was asleep I dreamed of these things, and when I awoke the first thing I thought of was this great work. All my desire was for the conversion of the heathen, and all my hope was in God."^{vi}

5:6

The "so then" indicates that an application is to come. What is God, through Paul, entreating the Thessalonians to do, given the fact that they are children of light? Two things are mentioned here.

In the spiritual sense, what would you understand "keep awake" and "be sober" to mean?

5:8

Notice the tense of the verb "having." This indicates it has already happened. The Thessalonians, Paul, and all Christians have put on these pieces of armor. Our sobriety comes from the fact that we have been saved.

Note here the three qualities mentioned in this verse of a person's life who belongs to the day. Where else have we heard and do we read of these characteristics?

It's also worth noting that though we HAVE put on the breastplate and the helmet, according to this verse, Paul commands the Ephesians to DO that very thing in chapter 6 of that book. Turn to Ephesians 6 and see what all the Christian is commanded to "put on." What does it mean that in Thessalonians Paul says we **have already done** this, and in another book that we **are to do** this?

5:9-10

Again, we have the little explanatory word “for.” What truths or concepts is Paul connecting here?

Praise be to God for his indescribable gift! Were it not for Jesus’ death on our behalf, there would be no salvation from sin. No rescue! Pause and worship God once again for this unfathomable grace.

5:9

There is a direct object “us” here in the first part of this verse. Who is the “us” that has not been destined for wrath? Is it all people? Who is Paul’s audience, with himself included?

5:10

Given the concerns that the Thessalonians have had, which we have seen addressed by Paul, (vv. 4:15-17) what does it mean that “whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him?”

Does it make your heart flutter to think on the fact that a day is coming when we will live with Christ? Though now in a sense we live with him, (to live is Christ and to die is gain) in another very real sense, we are aliens and strangers in this land called earth, (1 Pe. 2:11) and the city we are seeking is not here (Heb. 13:14). Right now, we see in a mirror dimly, but then we shall see face to face (1 Cor. 13:12). Now we are naked, spiritually speaking, but then we will be fully clothed (2 Cor. 5:3). Revelation 21:3 describes our future in the new heavens and the new earth: “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.” Take a few minutes to allow your mind to meditate on these truths. Let your heart long for this day, imagining the joys of what it will be like.

.....

5:11

After reading v. 11, look back at 4:18 and note the similarity. What would you say, based upon these, is one of Paul’s main purposes in writing this letter? _____

Isn’t it so astounding that the Maker of the universe—our God—loves to do this? He is **for** His people! We are the apple of His eye!

5:12-13

Why would it be important to Paul for the Thessalonians to respect their elders and esteem them very highly?

What does the word “admonish” mean? Look it up in a dictionary and write the definition below.

Notice this admonishing is a work both of the elders and of the people toward each other, as the word appears again in v. 14. What does this word point to as a significant role of the local church, though it is much neglected today? _____ What happens within a church where this is not practiced?

How do you receive admonishment? Have you allowed God to produce in you the humility it takes to be confronted over your sin?

Notice also the balance, though, of the commands in the verses that follow. What else, in addition to admonishment, is to characterize our interactions with one another?

5:15

To whom does Paul instruct us to do good? _____

What a lofty calling!

5:16-18

Many of us probably know and love these verses and have them memorized. What are the three commands that Paul gives to the church here that they are always to be doing? The second half of the verse refers to God’s will for us. The “this” seems to be pointing to all three verbs in the previous half. What is Paul saying then is God’s will for Christians?

Is it humanly possible to live in this way? Explain why or why not.

What does it look like to always rejoice? Allow 2 Corinthians 4:7-10 to shed light on this for you:

*⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.
⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.*

How does a person pray without stopping?

5:18

The preposition used here is noteworthy. Are we called to give thanks FOR all circumstances or IN them? _____

Neighborhood friends of ours with 6 children recently underwent the death of their husband/father, who was only 48 years old. On top of that, the family returned from his funeral to find that they had been robbed while they were there. What does it look like to rejoice always in a time like that? To give thanks in those circumstances?

5:19-20

We encounter a command here that is not discussed much in our circles. Verse 20 offers clarification on what the Thessalonians were doing that needed to change. Apparently some believers were prophesying, and others were rejecting their prophecies. Paul gives balanced instructions in the next verse about how wisely to deal with the issue. How do you think the believers were to test the prophecies in order to determine “what is good?” What is our authoritative standard (then and today) by which we measure truth and error?

5:23

The word “now” is probably indicating a shift that this is the end of the letter.

What is the name of God given here? _____ Why do you suppose that Paul refers to Him as that rather than the “God of love” or “holy God” or something else?

What does it mean to be completely sanctified? Does this verse imply that we can somehow reach a state of perfection on this earth? Why or why not? Use Scripture to support your understanding.

Who is doing the sanctifying in this verse? Why is that significant?

Note also the tense of the verb in the second half of the verse: “be kept.” This is a passive verb. That means someone else is doing the acting. God is the main Actor here. Philippians 2:12 tells us to “work

out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is GOD who works in you to will and to act according to His good pleasure.” And again in Philippians 1:6 , “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” See how similar v. 5:24 is! God is the faithful one!

Does this verse mean that we don’t play a part in our sanctification—that we are passive receivers only of God’s work in our lives? Absolutely not! Note how many commands there are in this final section (verses 12-28) alone of chapter 5. _____ God doesn’t give us commands so that we sit around and do nothing. There is very much a working together of God and the believer to produce our sanctification.

5:25-27

State the last three commands of this letter given in this section.

Even Paul who is so authoritative and Christlike requests prayer. What a strong reminder to us of our need for prayer and an example of humility! If Paul the Apostle requests prayer, how great also is our need for God’s help! Let us always be vulnerable and humble—willing to ask others for intercession—and to spend quality time ourselves crying out to the Lord for Him to hear and act on our behalf. May we walk with Him in full reliance on His strength rather than our own.

Why would Paul state so strongly that his letter is to be read to all the brothers?

CHAPTER/BOOK WRAP-UP

What does this fifth chapter teach us about the character/nature of God?

What do we learn in this chapter about humanity?

Does the author seem to be emphasizing anything in the chapter through repetition? If so, what?

In two sentences or less, summarize the contents of this chapter and then do the same of the entire book.

In what specific ways has God challenged, encouraged, and grown you through this study time in His Word?

ⁱ Quoted in *Five Who Changed the World*, by Danny Akin.

ⁱⁱ Akin, Daniel. *Five Who Changed the World*, 12.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid, 88.

^v Originally in "Worship the Risen Christ", 4-3-83 and quoted in Daniel Akin's *Five Who Changed the World*.

^{vi} Quoted in *Five Who Changed the World*, by Danny Akin, 10.