

1 Thessalonians Bible Study
Lesson 1 - 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
(week of September 11)

Verse to remember - 1 Thessalonians 1:4

“For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you.”

Gathering

If you are doing this Bible study with others, take some time to get to know each other. Have each person take 2-3 minutes to introduce themselves. Use a timer, because 3 minutes goes by fast! This should take you about 20-30 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Opening prayer (by leader)

Begin by sharing any general impressions of the book you have. Then...

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 aloud

1. Paul describes the Thessalonian church as being “in” God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1). What might this mean? What might this mean for our church?

(There is no obvious answer to this question, but see John 15:1-5 for some ideas.).

2. The triad of faith, love, and hope (1:3) is a favorite of Paul’s. What specific things can you say about these (somewhat vague) terms? See Romans 5:1-5, 1 Corinthians 13:13, Galatians 5:5-6; Colossians 1:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; see also Hebrews 10:22-24; 1 Peter 1:21-22.

Faith

Love

Hope

3. Paul says that he knows God has “chosen” the Thessalonian Christians (1:4). What is your understanding of being “chosen” by God? As an aid to your reflection, see John 15:16, Eph. 1:3-6, 2 Thess. 2:13-14, and 2 Peter 1:10-11. For a helpful description of this concept from a CRC perspective, see <https://www.thebanner.org/features/2015/11/the-good-news-about-election>.

4. Paul doesn't hesitate to bring in the *experiential* aspect of the Thessalonians' reception of the gospel (1:5) - something we often shy away from. Can you describe your own experience of hearing and receiving the gospel?

5. The Thessalonians turned from idols to the true and living God. Their idols would have been false gods like Dionysus, Isis, and Caesar. What are some of the idols prevalent in our culture, or in your own life, that you need to turn away from?

6. The report about the Thessalonian believers is that they turned to God from idols, serve a living and true God, and *wait for his Son from heaven*. Assuming you have turned from idols and serve God (or are trying to!), how is your life characterized by waiting for Jesus?

7. In 1:10 Paul makes first mention of a concept he will return to throughout 1-2 Thessalonians - the wrath of God. What feelings or responses does this concept bring up in you?

In his commentary, Nijay Gupta translates God's wrath as "God's coming anger for justice" (p. 40). Does this change your perception of God's wrath? How?

8. **Questions for personal application.** (*When we give time and space for it, God often speaks a personal word to us in scripture, addressing us in our particular circumstances. Thus, answers to these questions will differ from person to person; and will differ over time with the same person. Remember, God will never speak a word to us that is inconsistent with his character as it is revealed in Scripture.*)
What truth does this passage teach you?

What is God saying to you in this passage?

What difference does it make in your life?

How will you respond in obedience?

Closing prayer: Thank God for his Word, and ask his blessing on your group.