**Devotional Series for Church – 1 Thessalonians**

A 4-week devotional on the book of 1 Thessalonians for Healthy L.I.F.E. in and through our Head, Heart and Hand..

Extra materials (optional) for Week 1:

1. An overview of the book of 1 Thessalonians (by Bibleproject) <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/1-thessalonians/>
2. Key information and helpful resources for 1 Thessalonians (BibleProject Guides) <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-1-thessalonians/>

**Week 1**

**Day 1: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3**

*LISTEN to the Word*: Reflect on what the Thessalonian church is known for – which Paul, Silas and Timothy constantly mention in their prayers with thanksgiving to God.

*INVESTIGATE the Word*: Consider what faith-produced work, love-prompted labour and hope-inspired endurance would look like in a church.

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word*: Discuss with others in your small group which of these three areas the group can grow in, and share also the area for personal growth.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word*: Encourage someone you know who has displayed any one of these areas and share with them how you thank God for them being a model in your life.

**Day 2: 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6**

*LISTEN to the Word*: Pay attention to how the authors knew the Thessalonian disciples were chosen by God. What were the signs?

*INVESTIGATE the Word*: What does it mean for the gospel to come to one “not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction” and also joy in the midst of severe suffering?

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word*: Remember a time of suffering in your life and share with others how the gospel has given you power, deep conviction and joy during that time.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word*: Encourage someone to welcome the message of God, sharing verses with them about the joy and power that comes with embracing the gospel.

**Day 3: 1 Thessalonians 1:7-10**

*LISTEN to the Word*: Reflect on how the Thessalonian Christians became a model to all the believers everywhere.

*INVESTIGATE the Word*: Investigate the correlation of ‘the Lord’s message ringing out’ and

‘the faith of the Thessalonians becoming known everywhere’. How does faith amplify God’s message?

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word*: Discuss how sharing about our faith in God can help to ring God’s message out. How can we build a culture to share more faith stories?

*ENCOURAGE with the Word*: Encourage someone to place their faith in God by sharing your story and verses of God’s faithfulness.

**Day 4: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-3**

*LISTEN to the Word*: Reflect on the opposition Paul, Silas and Timothy faced while preaching in Thessalonica and the results that came from their time there (Cross Ref: Acts 17:1-15).

*INVESTIGATE the Word*: Investigate the reasons behind their courage to preach the gospel despite strong opposition, as opposed to responding with impure motives or trickery to get out of their sticky situation.

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word*: Discuss with others your natural responses in the face of opposition and perhaps “outrageous” mistreatment; and how you can rely on God’s help to still share the gospel.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word*: Encourage someone who is going through a difficult time, sharing verses about relying on God who will help us in our times of need.

**Day 5: 1 Thessalonians 2:4-7a**

*LISTEN to the Word*: Pay attention to the motivation and approach of Paul & companions’ ministry to the Thessalonians. Consider their confidence and gentleness/vulnerability (v. 7a) at the same time.

*INVESTIGATE the Word*: Investigate the convictions behind Paul, Silas and Timothy as they spoke the Word of God boldly.

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word*: Discuss the privilege of “being approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel”. How would this, coupled with the desire to please God change the way we share the gospel (good news) with others?

*ENCOURAGE with the Word*: Encourage someone to live righteously for God, sharing verses on pleasing God, rather than man.

**Day 6: 1 Thessalonians 2:7b-10**

*LISTEN to the Word*: Reflect on the authors’ way of life as they ministered to the Thessalonian church – what qualities of a mother they had shown to the Christians.

*INVESTIGATE the Word*: What would it mean to share not only the gospel, but also their lives? How would the Christians know about their hardship and their conduct?

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word*: Discuss what makes it a delight to share life with others? How does sharing our lives equate to loving others? (v. 8b) How can we do that in our small groups?

*ENCOURAGE with the Word*: Encourage someone by sharing a part of your life with them and what scripture has helped you.

**Day 7: 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12**

*LISTEN to the Word*: Pay attention to how Paul, Silas and Timothy treated the Christians also like a father with his children (in comparison with the role of a mother). What qualities of a father did they display?

*INVESTIGATE the Word*: Consider how the leaders could have encouraged, comforted and urged the Thessalonian Christians who were persecuted for their faith (Refer to other letters Paul had written to other churches who underwent similar persecution and challenging times too).

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word*: Discuss how we can be like a father to each other in our small group, offering encouragement, comfort and urging each other to live righteous lives.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word*: Encourage someone who has played that role of ‘father’ (this can also be a sister playing that role) to you , giving you the courage that you needed through a difficult time.

**Reflection Questions for Week 1:**

1. What are some keywords that jump at you about the kind of faith and life you can experience that comes as a result of pleasing God and relying on the Holy Spirit?
2. What can you learn from Paul, Silas and Timothy in the way you can love others, bearing the qualities of a child, mother and father?

**Week 2**

**Day 1: 1 Thessalonians 2:13**

*LISTEN* to the Word: Pay attention to the Thessalonians' response to the message heard from Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

*INVESTIGATE* the Word: Investigate the relation between believing in the Word and power from God.

*FELLOWSHIP* in the Word: Discuss how preaching and sharing the Word can help us experience God's power.

*ENCOURAGE* with the Word: Encourage someone by sharing verses about the promises of God’s power in our lives.

**Day 2: 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16**

*LISTEN* to the Word: Pay attention to how the Thessalonians imitated the other 1st-century churches in Judea.

*INVESTIGATE* the Word: Investigate the parallel between how the Gentile Thessalonian believers were being treated by their “own people” and how Jewish believers like Paul and his companions, and even Jesus Christ himself, were treated by their fellow Jews.

*FELLOWSHIP* in the Word: Discuss how these verses can explain the persecution by family and friends and reflect on how this passage can encourage you to stand firm in the face of suffering as Christians.

*ENCOURAGE*  with the Word: Encourage someone whom you know is suffering for their Christian beliefs.

**Day 3: 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20**

*LISTEN* to the Word: Pay attention to the description of the relationship between Paul, Silas, Timothy, and the Thessalonian church.

*INVESTIGATE* the Word: Investigate the Bible’s promises about hope, glory, and joy found in Christian relationships.

*FELLOWSHIP* in the Word: Share your experiences of the hope, glory, and joy found in Christian fellowship.

*ENCOURAGE* with the Word: Encourage someone in the fellowship and tell them how they have become your joy and glory.

**Day 4: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5**

*LISTEN* to the Word: Pay attention to the reasons for sending Timothy to the Thessalonians.

*INVESTIGATE* the Word: Investigate what the Bible says about the need to support those facing challenges in their faith.

*FELLOWSHIP* in the Word: Share with others your experiences of encouraging someone in their faith.

*ENCOURAGE* with the Word: Encourage someone in their faith today.

**Day 5: 1 Thessalonians 3:6-10**

*LISTEN* to the Word: Pay attention to the effect of Timothy's news of the Thessalonians on Paul and his companions.

*INVESTIGATE* the Word: Investigate how one's faith can be a source of encouragement for others suffering in similar situations.

*FELLOWSHIP* in the Word: Discuss with others how we may supply what is lacking in one another's faith.

*ENCOURAGE* with the Word: Pray with someone about how we may help each other in our faith.

**Day 6: 1 Thessalonians 3:11-12**

*LISTEN* to the Word: Pay attention to the prayer requests by Paul and his companions.

*INVESTIGATE* the Word: Reflect on the need for fellowship and the love in fellowship that comes from God.

*FELLOWSHIP* in the Word: Discuss the connection between fellowship and love.

*ENCOURAGE* with the Word: Share verses about fellowship and love with one another.

**Day 7: 1 Thessalonians 3:13**

*LISTEN* to the Word: Pay attention to the purpose of strengthening the hearts of disciples in this prayer request.

*INVESTIGATE* the Word: Investigate the kind of life believers are called to till the second coming of Jesus Christ. Reflect on the need for disciples to be strengthened by God, instead of depending on their own strength.

*FELLOWSHIP* in the Word: Discuss how we can strengthen one another till the second coming of Jesus Christ.

*ENCOURAGE* with the Word: Pray with someone, asking God to strengthen your hearts.

**Week 3**

**Day 1: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2**

*LISTEN to the Word:*Pay attention to Paul’s instruction to the disciples on how to live to please God, and to do so ‘more and more’ as they matured in Christ.

*INVESTIGATE the Word:* Investigate what it means to live to please God as a basic tenet and expectation of being a disciple. How is this calling tied to the fact that we have been bought by the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:20)?

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:*Discuss with one another how living to please God is a command (instructed by Jesus’ authority) and what doing so ‘more and more’ looks like in practice.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:*To encourage someone, share one way you have observed how they have been living to please God more and more. Also give yourself a pat on the back if you too are excited that your Christian life is not stagnant, but dynamic and growing!

**Day 2: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6a**

*LISTEN to the Word:*Pay attention to how Paul again emphasised that his instructions to live holy and honourable lives were from God (and not by his own authority).

*INVESTIGATE the Word:* Investigate the concept of our sanctification as a necessary aspect of living to please God. Reflect on why Paul referred specifically to sexual immorality (research into the morals of Roman society at that time).

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:*Discuss with others what the verses say about why it is God’s will for every Christian today to live according to the Bible and not the world’s standards, as much as the 1st century disciples were to live lives that were set apart from Roman society.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:*Encourage someone with how living to please God daily can change their lives, using your own life as an example.

**Day 3: 1 Thessalonians 4:6b-8**

*LISTEN to the Word:*Pay attention to how Paul warned (and not just instructed) against sexual immorality because of its dire consequences.

*INVESTIGATE the Word:*Investigate the idea of a just God who will punish all unrepentant sinners. Reflect on how this can motivate us to desire to live holy lives that glorify God through our bodies instead of sinful lives (1 Corinthians 6: 13a-20).

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:*Discuss with others what other reasons are given for why we are commanded to live sexually pure lives.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:*Encourage someone with how God has given us the Holy Spirit so we can overcome sin and live holy lives as He has commanded.

**Day 4: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10**

*LISTEN to the Word:*Pay attention to what Paul said about who it was who had taught the Thessalonians to love and how he urged them to grow in loving ‘more and more’!

*INVESTIGATE the Word:*Investigate the notion that loving one another should be almost natural for disciples (hence we should need no instruction on it).

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:*Discuss with others bible verses that remind us that we have learnt about love directly from God, and how we should grow in love for others.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word***:** Encourage someone about the ways they have exemplified God’s love, or share about how you have seen our church demonstrate God’s love to others beyond our church and Singapore.

**Day 5: 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12**

*LISTEN to the Word:*Pay attention to Paul’s instructions regarding the kind of exemplary life disciples were to lead.

*INVESTIGATE the Word:* Investigate the concept of a ‘quiet life’ and reflect on the importance of being quiet/still so we can listen to God, get to know Him and see Him working in our lives. Start by looking up verses on being ‘still’ (e.g. Exodus 14:13–14; Psalm 46:10).

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:*Discuss with others your thoughts on what it takes, and why it is important, to lead an exemplary Christian life. How does this life differ from a worldly lifestyle tied to excitement, entertainment and electronics? (Note: If you think ‘minding your own business’ means being self-focused, read Galatians 6:2).

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:*Encourage someone with how their life has had a positive impact on non-disciples.

**Day 6: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17a**

*LISTEN to the Word:*Pay attention to Paul’s reassurances that all believers, dead and alive, will be equally received by Jesus when he returns. (Note: The return of Jesus must have been of concern to the Thessalonians because it is also mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 1:4 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7b-10).

*INVESTIGATE the Word:*Investigate Paul’s admonition to disciples to not be ignorant about important issues such as Jesus’ return (verse 13; see also Romans 11:25; 1 Corinthians 12:1 and 2 Corinthians 1:8).

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:*Discuss with others why disciples, whether alive or dead when Jesus returns, can be confident of a home in Heaven.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:*Encourage a non-believer to study the Bible so that they too can share in God’s promise of a place in Heaven for His faithful followers.

**Day 7: 1 Thessalonians 4: 17b-18**

*LISTEN to the Word:*Pay attention to Paul’s emphasis for disciples to encourage one another with what he had shared with them (rather than to simply take personal encouragement from his words).

*INVESTIGATE the Word:*Investigate the responsibility that comes with knowing what is promised for the faithful versus the rest of the world when we finally face judgement (John 12: 47-48).

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:*Discuss with one another how ready you feel to meet Jesus, and how the assurance of spending eternity with Him encourages you.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:* Encourage someone by sharing verses that highlight what faithful disciples can look forward to in Heaven.

**Reflection Questions for Week 3:**

1. In what ways do the instructions that Paul conveyed (by the authority of God) to the Thessalonica church in 1 Thessalonians 4, remind you of how God cared enough to provide instructions through Moses, as to how the Israelites were to conduct their lives in Deuteronomy?

1. Reflect on how comforting it is to know that we have the same God with the same loving and caring heart for us today as the Israelites did thousands of years ago, and that He will be so until Jesus returns!

**Week 4**

**Day 1: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5**

*LISTEN to the Word:* Pay attention to how Paul contrasted the disciples’ view of the second coming of Jesus, in comparison to that of non-believers.

*INVESTIGATE the Word:* Investigate what would cause the disciples to look forward to what is considered a dreadful event. [Read another similar passage in 2 Peter 3:10-13].

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:* Share and listen to each other on how you feel about the “Day of the Lord”. What is the Spirit prompting you to do after the discussion?

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:* Encourage a disciple by reminding him/her that heaven is our final destination. Or encourage a non-believer to seek after God’s truth this week.

**Day 2: 1 Thessalonians 5:6-11**

*LISTEN to the Word:* Pay attention to what Paul instructed the disciples to do while waiting for the second coming of Jesus.

*INVESTIGATE the Word:* Reflect and consider why Paul used armour (‘breastplate’ and ‘helmet’) worn for war to connect faith, love and hope of salvation. [Recommended to also read Ephesians 6:11-17]

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:* Have a fun discussion on what would be our modern spiritual armour. What spiritual battles do you face daily and how does your spiritual armour prepare you?

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:* Encourage and urge another disciple to remain alert and always be prepared.

**Day 3: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13**

*LISTEN to the Word:* Pay attention to Paul’s instructions to acknowledge the disciples who worked hard among them. [Read again 1 Thess 5:8 & 11]

*INVESTIGATE the Word:* Think about someone who has cared for you in the Lord, e.g. your leader. Think about the faith and love needed to care for someone like you. Consider imitating such faith and love.

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:* Discuss with others on what the motivation is behind someone to care for us, and admonish us, and work hard for the Lord. Discuss also your plan to acknowledge such a person.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:* Individually and collectively, acknowledge someone who has worked hard and cared for you in subsequent weeks.

**Day 4: 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15**

*LISTEN to the Word:* Pay attention to how Paul instructed disciples to treat those in weaker spiritual conditions. Consider if this set of instructions was for everyone or only for leaders.

*INVESTIGATE the Word:* Reflect on Jesus’ love for those in weaker spiritual conditions, and consider what he would do. What is the crucial character specifically mentioned in the verses when it comes to helping others?

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:* Think about someone who is in your small group who is in a weaker spiritual condition and needs encouragement. Discuss with someone in your group on how to apply v14-15.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:* Individually and collectively, plan to take action to encourage the weak in subsequent weeks.

**Day 5: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

*LISTEN to the Word:* Pay attention to Paul’s instructions on the set of three ‘Always’ mentioned in these verses, noting that these are God’s will in Christ Jesus.

*INVESTIGATE the Word:* Reflect on one or all of these questions:

* How do you think these three ‘Always’ relate to each other?
* How do these relate to faith? How does being in Christ Jesus make this possible?

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:* Discuss how loving each other would help in practising the three ‘Always’? [Read 1 Thess 1:2, 2:13, 3:7, 3:9]

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:* Set aside time with your small group or family to list down things you are grateful for, and thank God as a group.

**Day 6: 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22**

*LISTEN to the Word:* Pay attention to the set of ‘Do’s’ and ‘Don’ts’ from Paul to the disciples.

*INVESTIGATE the Word:* Reflect on the ways we can quench the working of the Spirit in our own lives or others. Investigate in what ways we can treat prophecies with contempt.

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:* Share with other disciples what you have learnt and what is the Spirit prompting you to do after any sermon or lesson you hear this week or recently.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:* Encourage the preacher by sharing with him verbally or giving him a text on how the lesson has helped you.

**Day 7 - 9: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28**

*LISTEN to the Word:* Take the time to imagine Paul himself saying these final greetings to you.

*INVESTIGATE the Word:* Reflect or research on God’s Names mentioned in the greetings:

* God of Peace (Jehovah Shalom)
  + Origin: Judges 6:24
  + <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/shalom-peace/>
  + Jesus is our peace, Ephesians 2:14-16
* God who sanctifies (Jehovah Mekaddishkem)
  + Origin: Exodus 31:13.
  + Oil is the symbol of Holy Spirit (Ps 23:5, Acts 10:38)
  + Jesus is the one who makes us Holy (Heb 2:11)
* Jesus is Faithful and True (Rev 3:14, Rev 19:11)

*FELLOWSHIP in the Word:* Discuss with each other your findings on your research or reflections on God’s Names.

*ENCOURAGE with the Word:* Reflect on how you have been blessed and sanctified personally by Jesus through and through. Share your reflection with someone and remind each other that our faithful Lord Jesus will continue to sanctify our spirit, soul and body till he comes for us. Amen!