

Workbook On The Two Epistles To The Thessalonians



“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering 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, knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.” (1 *Thessalonians* 1:2–4)

David Padfield

The Scripture text used in this workbook is The New King James Version.

© 1979, 1980, 1982 Thomas Nelson, Inc.

1 and 2 Thessalonians

Writing with gratitude and affection to a church that he had visited only briefly, Paul's first and second epistles to the Thessalonians offer words of encouragement to a faithful but struggling church, and they focus particularly on the encouragement offered by the return of Christ.

Author

First Thessalonians went unchallenged as a Pauline epistle until the nineteenth century, when radical critics claimed that its dearth of doctrinal content made its authenticity suspect. But the proportion of doctrinal teaching in Paul's epistles varies widely, and 1 Thessalonians was written to deal with one particular doctrinal issue—the return of Christ.

The external attestation to the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is even stronger than that for 1 Thessalonians. Internally, the vocabulary, style, and doctrinal content support the claims in 2 Thessalonians 1:1 and 3:7 that it was written by Paul.

Date

Both Thessalonian epistles were written during Paul's second missionary journey, thus making them among the earliest of the New Testament books. After a brief stay in Thessalonica, the capital city of Macedonia, Paul journeyed to the south through Berea and Athens to Corinth, where he spent eighteen months. During the early part of his stay in Corinth from A.D. 51 to 52, Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians.

A few months later, while Paul was still in Corinth, he received word from Thessalonica that his teaching on the day of the Lord had been misunderstood by some in the Thessalonian church. Paul then wrote another epistle, 2 Thessalonians, to correct certain misunderstandings and further to encourage the church.

In Paul's time, Thessalonica was the prominent seaport and the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. This prosperous city was located on the Via Egnatia, the main road from Rome to the east, and was within sight of Mount Olympus, legendary home of the Greek pantheon.

A city of perhaps 200,000 in the first century A.D., Thessalonica had a sizable Jewish population, and the ethical monotheism of the Jewish religion attracted many Gentiles who had become disenchanted with Greek paganism. According to 1 Thessalonians 1:9 and 2:14–16, most of the Thessalonian converts were Gentiles who came out of idolatry.

Themes and Literary Structure

After Paul's forced separation from the Thessalonians (Acts 17:1–9), he grew increasingly concerned about the progress of their faith. First Thessalonians was written to commend and encourage the Thessalonian believers, who were enduring persecution, and to offer consolation concerning their loved ones who had died in Christ. The theme of Christ's coming recurs throughout the epistle, and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 provides one of the fullest New Testament treatments of this crucial truth. The two major sections of 1 Thessalonians are: Paul's personal reflections of the Thessalonians (chs. 1–3), and Paul's instructions for the Thessalonians (chs. 4–5).

Second Thessalonians is the theological sequel to First Thessalonians. Not long after receiving 1 Thessalonians from Paul, some of the Thessalonian believers fell prey to false teaching, thinking the final day of the Lord had already begun. Paul wrote this brief letter to correct that error by pointing out that certain identifiable events will precede the final day of the Lord and to encourage the Thessalonian believers, whose faith was being tested by persecution. Addressing the problem of those who refused to work because they thought the end was near or already upon them, Paul encouraged the Thessalonian Christians to attend to their labors and not to live off others. Second Thessalonians may be divided into three major sections: Paul's encouragement in persecution (ch. 1); Paul's explanation of the day of the Lord (ch. 2); and Paul's exhortation to the church (ch. 3).

Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts
pp. 424–427



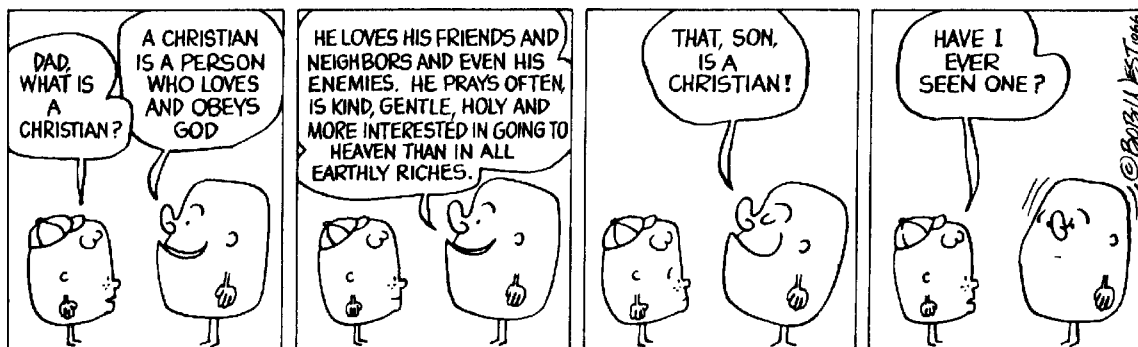
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10



1 Paul, 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. 2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3 remembering 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, 4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. 5 For 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. 6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. 8 For 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. 9 For 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, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Greetings From Paul

1. What do we know about Sylvanus and Timothy?
2. Why did Paul constantly remember these brethren in prayer?
3. What is the “election by God”?
4. How did the gospel come to Thessalonica? Does it come the same way to us today?
5. What two things accompanied the reception of the word?
6. In what way were the Thessalonians “examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe”?
7. What happened when those in Thessalonica turned to God?
8. What does Jesus deliver us from?



1 Thessalonians 2:1–12



1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2 But 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. 3 For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. 4 But 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. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. 8 So, 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. 9 For 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. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; 11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Paul's Manner Of Life

1. What happened to Paul at Philippi?
2. After his poor treatment in Philippi how did Paul preach the gospel in Thessalonica?
3. What was Paul entrusted with? When did he receive this trust?
4. What did Paul deny using at Thessalonica?
5. How did Paul treat the saints at Thessalonica?
6. What did Paul impart to those at Thessalonica?
7. Describe Paul's manner of life while at Thessalonica.
8. What does it mean to "walk worthy of God"?
9. How did God call us "into His own kingdom and glory"?

1 Thessalonians 2:13–20



13 For 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. 14 For 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, 15 who 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, 16 forbidding 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. 17 But 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. 18 Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. 19 For 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? 20 For you are our glory and joy.



Receiving The Lord

1. How did the Thessalonians receive the word of God?
2. How does the word of God “effectively work in you who believe”?
3. How were the Thessalonians to become “imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus”?
4. At whose hands did the Thessalonians suffer?
5. How does Paul describe the Judeans?
6. Explain this phrase: “so as always to fill up the measure of their sins.”
7. What did Paul eagerly desire?
8. Who had hindered Paul? How did this happen?
9. Who was Paul’s hope, joy, and crown of rejoicing?

1 Thessalonians 3:1–13



1 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, 2 and 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, 3 that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. 4 For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. 5 For 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. 6 But 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— 7 therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. 8 For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. 9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, 10 night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith? 11 Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. 12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, 13 so 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.

The Work Of Timothy

1. Who did Paul send from Athens? Why was this man chosen?
2. What was this messenger of Paul to do at Thessalonica?
3. What were those at Thessalonica “appointed to”?
4. What great concern did Paul express in 1 Thessalonians 3:5?
5. What did Timothy bring to Paul?
6. How was Paul comforted in the midst of his affliction?
7. What was Paul’s prayer “night and day”?
8. How would God “direct” Paul’s way to Thessalonica?
9. In what item did Paul desire the Thessalonians to increase?
10. How does God “establish” our hearts?

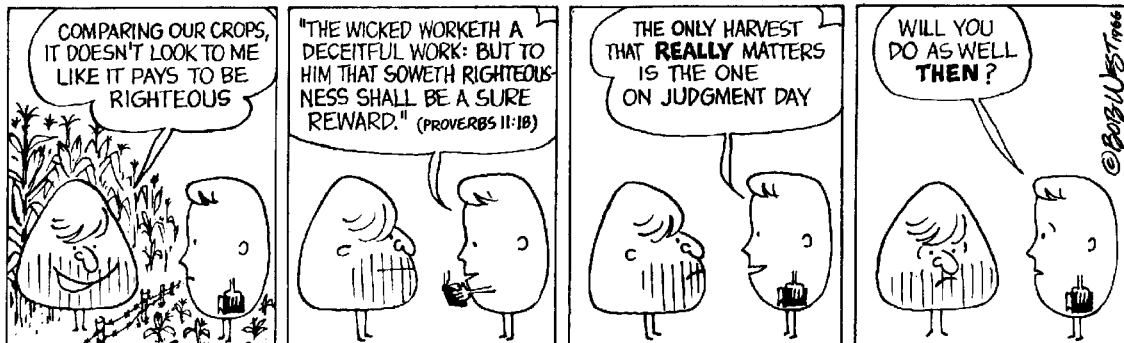
1 Thessalonians 4:1-8



1 Finally 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; 2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that 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. 7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. 8 Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

Exhortations For Moral Purity

1. What did Paul “urge and exhort” the brethren to do?
2. What did the brethren receive from Paul?
3. What commandments did Paul deliver to them?
4. What is included in the phrase “sexual immorality”?
5. How does Paul describe the Gentiles?
6. How could one “take advantage of and defraud his brother”?
7. Who is the “avenger”? What does this mean?
8. What did God “call us to”?



1 Thessalonians 4:9–18



9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 10 and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; 11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing. 13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For 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. 16 For 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. 17 Then 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. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.



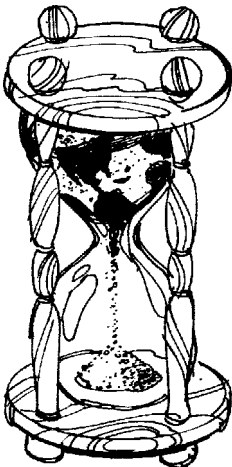
Brotherly Love

1. How are we “taught by God to love one another”?
2. What did Paul encourage the brethren to increase in?
3. What should we aspire to?
4. How do we “walk properly toward those who are outside”?
5. Who are those who have “fallen asleep”?
6. How are we to “sorrow”? How is this different from non-Christians?
7. Give the chronology of the events listed in 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17.
8. What group of people will “rise first”? Why?
9. How long will those who are “caught up” going to be with the Lord?
10. How do the words of this chapter bring comfort?

1 Thessalonians 5:1–11



1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.
2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.
3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.
4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.
5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.
6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.
7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.
8 But 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.
9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.
11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.



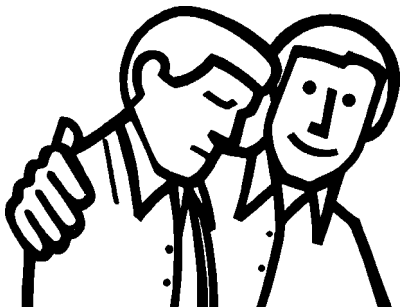
The Day Of The Lord

1. What are the "times and the seasons" referred to in verse one?
2. What is "the day of the Lord"? How is it described?
3. When will "sudden destruction" come? How many will escape?
4. Why should we be able to avoid being surprised in that day?
5. Why are evil men described as being "of the night" and "of darkness"?
6. What items are Christians to "put on"?
7. What did God appoint us to?
8. What can we learn from 1 Thessalonians 5:10?
9. How can we comfort one another?

1 Thessalonians 5:12–28



12 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. 15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil. 23 Now 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. 24 He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. 25 Brethren, pray for us. 26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. 27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren. 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **Amen.**



Further Exhortations

1. How are we “to recognize those who labor among” us? Who are these people? How should we regard them?
2. How can we “be at peace among ourselves”?
3. What four admonitions are given in 1 Thessalonians 5:14?
4. What should we pursue with all men?
5. Explain this phrase: “Pray without ceasing.”
6. How could one “quench the Spirit”?
7. Explain this phrase: “abstain from every form of evil.”
8. How are we “preserved” until the coming of the Lord?
9. What is the “holy kiss”?
10. What charge did Paul end this book with?

2 Thessalonians 1:1–12



1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, 4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, 5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; 6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed. 11 Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Tribulation And Rest

1. What is “the church of the Thessalonians”?
2. Why did Paul give thanks to God?
3. What did Paul boast about?
4. What is the “manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God”?
5. How is one “counted worthy of the kingdom of God”?
6. What did Paul consider to be “a righteous thing” with God?
7. What will happen to the unrighteous when Christ returns?
8. How will Christ “be glorified in His saints and (to) be admired among all those who believe”?
9. How can we “fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness”?
10. In this passage, how is the name of Christ glorified?



1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The Falling Away

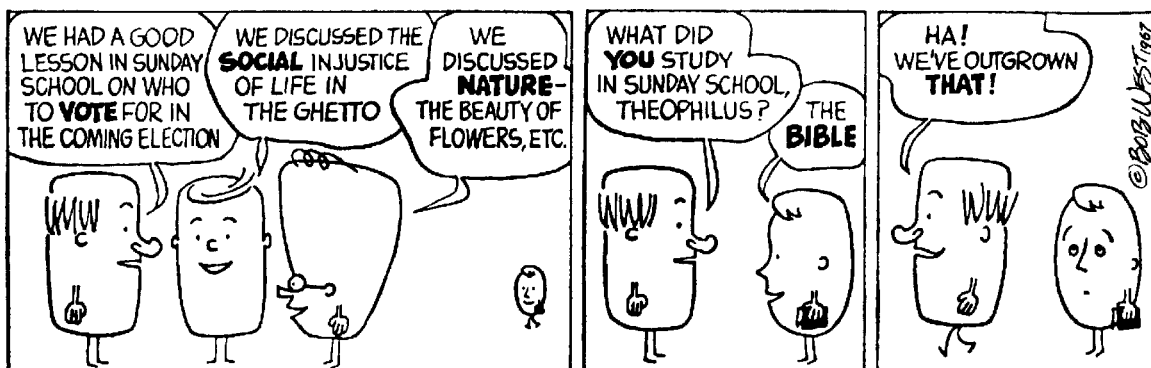
1. Over what topic could some of the brethren be “shaken in mind”?
2. What “day” did some of the brethren think had already come?
3. What has to take place before “that Day” comes?
4. Who or what is “the man of sin”?
5. How is “the son of perdition” described in this passage?
6. What was “restraining” in this passage?
7. What is the “mystery of lawlessness”?
8. What was to accompany “the coming of the lawless one”?
9. What did God promise to send to some people? Why?
10. Why did the people of 2 Thessalonians 2:12 perish?



13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Called By The Gospel

1. In this passage, why did Paul give thanks to God?
2. How did God “choose” us for salvation?
3. What elements are needed for our sanctification?
4. How did God “call us”? Does He still do this today?
5. What are the “traditions” we are to “stand fast” in?
6. In this passage, what has God given us?
7. How can God “comfort” our hearts?
8. How does God establish us?



2 Thessalonians 3:1–5



1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. 5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Pray For Us

1. What did Paul request of the brethren?
2. How does God's word "run swiftly"? Please explain.
3. Who are the "unreasonable and wicked men" in this passage?
4. What is the Lord "faithful" in?
5. How does Christ "guard us" from the evil one?
6. What confidence did Paul have?
7. How does the Lord "direct" our hearts?
8. What is the "patience of Christ"?





6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. 14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. 16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. 17 The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. **Amen.**



Withdraw Yourself

1. This passage commands us to “withdraw” from certain Christians. What does this phrase mean?
2. What does the word “disorderly” mean?
3. What kind of example did Paul leave at Thessalonica?
4. What command did Paul leave with the saints at Thessalonica?
5. What had the “disorderly” at Thessalonica started doing?
6. How could we “grow weary in well doing”?
7. What are we to do with those who do not “obey this epistle”?
8. How are we to regard those who do not “obey this epistle”?
9. What does the word “admonish” mean?
10. What is the significance of the phrase, “The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle”?