

1 Thessalonians Notes

Following Jesus produces a counter-cultural (**Holy**) way of life...
That responds to hostility with **Love** and Generosity...
That is motivated by **Hope** in the coming kingdom of Jesus

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The earliest letter we have from Paul

Paul and Silas went to the ancient Greek city of Thessalonica

- After one month of witnessing of Jesus there, many Jewish and Greeks gave their allegiance to Jesus (See Acts 17)
- Formed the first Church community there
- Trouble was brewing...Paul's announcement of Jesus being the true Lord of the world led to suspicion. The Christians were accused of defying Caesar the Roman emperor when they said there was another King Jesus([Acts 17:7](#)).

This led to persecution that got so intense that Paul and Silas had to flee from the city which was painful for them because they loved the people there so much.

So this letter is Paul's attempt to reconnect with the Christians in Thessalonica after he got a report from Timothy that they were doing more than ok and were flourishing despite the intense persecution.

Thanksgiving Prayer [1:1-5](#)

I thank God for your faith, love for others, and hope in Jesus despite persecution.

Chapters 1-3 A Celebration of Faithfulness

Chapter 1:6-10 The Thessalonians' Conversion

Retells the story of former adulterous polytheists and living in a culture where all of life was permeated by institutions and practices that honored the Greek and Roman gods.

Paul talks about how they turned away from those idols to serve the living and true God, and that their now waiting for the coming of God's son from Heaven. ([1:9-10](#))

In a city like Thessalonica, Transferring allegiance came at a cost:

- Isolation from your neighbors
- Hostility from family

However, for the Thessalonians, the overwhelming love of Jesus who died for them and the hope of his return made it all worth it!

Chapter 2:1-12 Paul's Mission in Thessalonica

- Dear friendships formed
- Used deep metaphors:
 - They treated Paul like their child, and he became like their Father and Mother (See [2:8](#))

Christian Leadership is about relationships and loving service - he reminds them that he never asked for money; he simply came to love and serve them in the name of Jesus

Chapter 2:13-16 Their Common Persecution

Paul reflects on their common persecution and that together their persecution shares in the story of Jesus' sufferings

Chapter 2:17-3:10 Paul's Anguish...

He was troubled by their torment after he and Silas fled and sent Timothy to see how they were doing, which they were going strong and that they missed Paul as well.

Prayer for Endurance [3:11-13](#)

May God increase your capacity to love, strengthen their commitment to holiness, as they fix their hope on the return of king Jesus

Chapters 4-5 A Challenge to Grow

Chapter 4:1-8 Holiness and Sexual Purity

1st a serious contrast to the world around them

Following Jesus' teachings on Sex and Marriage ([Matthew 5:27-32](#); [19:1-12](#))

- Experiencing the beauty and the power of sex within the haven of a committed marriage covenant relationship
- Destroys people and their dignity, dishonors

Chapter 4:9-12 Commitment to Love and Service

Christians should be known in the city as a reliable people who work really hard; not just to make money, but so that they can have resources to provide for themselves and to share with others who are in need.

Chapter 4:13-18 Future Hope of Jesus' Return

Questions raised. Christians died most likely killed as martyrs. Despite death nothing can separate us from Jesus.

Jesus will call both the living and the dead (4:16)

Paul uses language equivalent to the meeting of the arrival of Caesar as he does Jesus (who will be met in the air) (4:17)

Chapter 5: 1-11 This Hope Should Motivate Faithfulness

Caesar who brings peace and security - FALSE

Roman's peace came through violence, enslaving enemies, and military occupation

Paul warns that Jesus will come one day and confront this evil (5:2-3)

So Live in the Present as if it has already happened (5:4)

Prayer of Hope 5:23-28

May God keep you Holy as you await King Jesus