

LIFE GROUP

Leader Guide



THE MODEL CHURCH

Study of 1 Thessalonians

NAME _____



wentzville
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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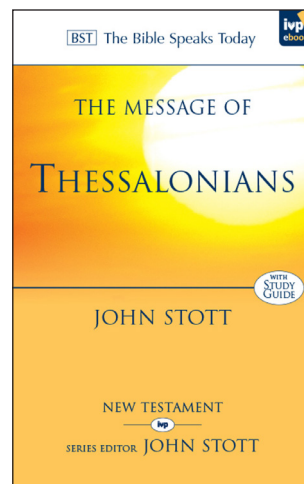
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COMMENTARY FOR THIS STUDY



LETTER FROM ALEX

Can you believe it's already May? We are excited to dive into this final Life Group study as we wrap up this season!

Over the next two months, our church will be journeying through the book of 1 Thessalonians, and for the next four weeks, our Life Groups will be focusing specifically on the prayers Paul shares throughout this letter. We'll explore three of these powerful prayers in the first three weeks, and then we'll conclude our time together with a special prayer experience designed to help us reflect and respond.

Notice the title and theme of this study: "Model Church." So, what does a model church do or look like? It's a community that prays—faithfully, fervently, and for one another. It's a people who listen with care, lift each other up, and bring one another's needs before the Lord. Our hope is that this study deepens your prayer life and strengthens the relationships within your group as you finish out the spring.

We're looking forward to all that God will do in and through this season. Let's lean in together!

Thanks everyone!


Alex Goff
Discipleship Minister

WEEK 1 | A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. Share a moment when someone helped you through a hard time. What happened and what did that person do to help?
2. How can praying for someone be a form of helping them through a hard time?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Over the next four weeks, we will dive into the book of 1 Thessalonians, specifically focusing on the prayers that Paul offers on behalf of the church. Paul lives out this call to GO LOVE by praying for his brothers and sisters in Thessalonica. Before we study our first prayer, scan this QR code to watch an overview video of 1 Thessalonians created by the Bible Project.
 - a. 
2. Based on what you saw in the video, what are the different ways that the church in Thessalonica is experiencing difficulty?
3. Have someone in your group read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 and encourage everyone to follow along in their own copy of the Scriptures. What aspects of the church in Thessalonica is Paul thankful for?
 - a. He's thankful for who they are as people (vs. 2). He's thankful for their faith in God and the work that is coming from it. He's thankful for their love and how it motivates their labor. He's thankful for their endurance as it flows from their hope that Jesus will return one day.

- b.** Commentary from Commentaries: Faith is directed towards God, love towards others (both within the Christian fellowship and beyond it), and hope towards the future, in particular the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Similarly, 'faith rests on the past; love works in the present; hope looks to the future.
- 4. Based on the context of 1 Thessalonians and what you saw from the Bible Project video, why are faith, love, and hope important traits for this church to hold onto?**
- 5. Paul's thankfulness for the church leads him to pray for the church. Thankfulness can draw us into prayer! Write 10 names in the space below. Next to the names, write why you are thankful for them. (For example: My wife - How she serves and loves our children. My boss - The way he challenges me to grow.)**
- 6. With the names you just wrote, spend a few minutes in prayer voicing the names to God and why you are thankful for those relationships.**
- 7 What are some practical things you can do to become a more thankful person?**

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

MISSION OF THE WEEK: Show Me Christian Youth Home

Going beyond the limits of traditional foster care, children living at Show-Me Christian Youth Home receive therapeutic benefits from specialized programs in a Christ-centered, family environment. Working together, they help each child—physically, academically, emotionally, and spiritually—overcome the struggles of their past and prepare for a successful future. For more information, visit showmehelpingkids.com.

WEEK 2 | A PRAYER OF ENDURANCE

CONNECT QUESTION

1. Share a moment when someone helped you complete a goal. What was the goal and what did that person do to help?
2. A study by the University of California found that gym attendance, when going with a friend, increased visits by 35%. A study by the University of South Australia found that 23% more university students passed when studying with a buddy than those who studied alone. Explain these findings. Why do we make each other better when striving to achieve a goal?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Last session, our group talked about how Paul lived out this call to GO LOVE by praying for his brothers and sisters in Thessalonica. Today, we are going to look at a second prayer given by Paul. Have someone in your group read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 and encourage everyone to follow along in their own copy of the Scriptures. What is Paul requesting from God within these verses?
 - a. He asks God to clear the way so that a return trip to Thessalonica would be possible. He prays that the church's love would increase for one another and for others. He concludes his prayer by asking God to strengthen their hearts in their pursuit of living holy and pure lives.
2. Let's look at the first part of his prayer. Paul asks God for an opportunity to return to Thessalonica. In 1st Thessalonians 2:18, we learn that Paul wanted to visit the church earlier, but Satan was blocking his way. What happened when Paul first visited the city? Have someone within your group read Acts 17:1-9 and encourage everyone to follow along in their own copy of the Scriptures. How do we see evidence of Satan's work within Thessalonica?

3. Satan is at work within our world today! He wants to hinder us in our goal of following Jesus. How does that make you feel? How should you respond to this reality?
4. One way that Paul wants the church in Thessalonica to respond to this threat is by loving one another. Why is loving one another essential in this battle against the enemy? What do you lose when you are not loving one another?

NOTE: Have your group divide into men & women. Numbers 5-7 will be covered by the subgroups.

5. The last part of Paul's prayer is that their hearts would be strengthened as they strive to live holy and pure. Have someone in your group read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 and encourage everyone to follow along in their copy of the Scriptures. What unique challenge did the church in Thessalonica face that threatened its holiness and purity?
6. Satan continues to use sexual immorality as a way of luring Christians off the path toward righteousness. Lust is often one of the biggest challenges that Christians face. How are you doing in this battle against lust? Where are you struggling and how can your group help you?
7. Pray within your smaller group.

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

MISSION OF THE WEEK: Jireh India Missions

Jireh India Missions shares the good news of Jesus with those who have never heard His name. They provide homes and education for orphans at House of Peace, teach widows to sew so they can provide for their children, provide bread for much of their community through Five Loaves Bakery, and work with a leper colony. They strive to fulfill Psalm 82:3 — Defend the poor and orphans; do justice to the afflicted and needy.

WEEK 3 | A PRAYER OF HOPE

CONNECT QUESTION

1. What is something that you are hopeful for right now?
2. What are different ways that our culture defines and applies the word hope?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Paul's last prayer for the church in Thessalonica is a prayer of hope. Have someone in your group read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 and encourage everyone to follow along in their own copy of the Scriptures. What is the source of hope that Paul is drawing from within these verses?
 - a. Paul finds hope in the return of Jesus Christ. He reminds the church that the Lord is faithful and will do it. Jesus is coming back again!
2. Consider the context of 1 Thessalonians, which we have been learning about in the last two sessions. Why is hope an important message for this specific church? What are they going through, and why do they need hope?
3. We get more information about the return of Jesus in chapter four. Have someone read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and encourage everyone to follow along in their own copy of the Scriptures. Imagine you are someone in Thessalonica who has lost a Christian friend to persecution. How do these verses and the return of Jesus bring hope to you?

4. Until that day comes, Paul encourages the believers to surrender to God's sanctifying work in their lives. Sanctification is the process of becoming more and more like Jesus every day. Paul challenges the church to live blamelessly in preparation for Christ's return. How can this future hope motivate us to flee from sin?

5. Paul concludes his prayer in 1 Thessalonians 5:24 by saying, "The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it" (NIV). Why do you think he said this? What could have been happening in the church in Thessalonica that spurred Paul to close his prayer in this way?

6. What would change about your life if you took the hope of Jesus' return more seriously?

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

MISSION OF THE WEEK: Righteous Rides

Righteous Rides' Vision is that every international missionary has access to affordable and stress-free stateside transportation. Their Mission is to provide care and cars to missionaries on home assignment... in a manner worthy of God. For more information, visit righteousrides.org.

WEEK 4 | PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. **READ:** One of the last things Paul says to the church in this letter is, “Brothers and sisters, pray for us” (1 Thessalonians 5:25 NIV). Throughout 1st Thessalonians, Paul, in an attempt to GO LOVE, has been praying hard for this persecuted church. Now, Paul asks for prayer! This letter teaches us that a defining trait of Christian relationships is that we pray for one another. For our last group session of the spring, the agenda is simple. We are going to pray for one another!

Each of us will have an opportunity to share where we need prayer. Maybe it’s in our faith walk, maybe it’s within our families, maybe it’s with a sin struggle, or maybe it’s with a big life decision! After each person shares, we will take some time to pray for that person. After we pray, the next person will share. One of the best ways we can GO LOVE each other is by being vulnerable and honest, praying for one another.

Who would like to start?

PRAYER REQUESTS:

2. **Leader Note:** After your group finishes, brainstorm what you want to do for the summer. We recommend that your group finds time to fellowship over the next few months. Get together for a barbeque, a baseball game, a camping trip, or a pool party. If you want to continue doing a study, feel free to break away and cover a subject that interests your group. If you need help finding a study, email me at alex@wentzvillecc.org. Thanks, everyone!

NOTES:

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

MISSION OF THE WEEK: CMF International: Daniel & Kelsey

Daniel & Kelsey serve in a closed country in North Africa where they are leading others to Christ while helping to run a rock-climbing business as their reason for being in the country. They live there with their two young children. Please pray that they are able to continue to change lives through the power of the Holy Spirit working through them and in the people around them.



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