



Finer Grounds Bible Study

1 & 2 Thessalonians

Lesson 7: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

I am so thankful you are still with us as we are studying through these wonderful letters. It is my hope that you are starting to fully grasp what Paul is teaching and the relationship he had with the Christians in Thessalonica. As we continue through our study, make sure you are still reading through 1 & 2 Thessalonians each week. The further we get, the more connections will pop out at you.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The Christians in Thessalonica were struggling to grasp the concept of Christ's return. This confusion would continue, and Paul will address it once again in 2 Thessalonians. There were several false ideas circulating; here, Paul takes the time to address one very specifically.

Who had the Thessalonians been misinformed about according to 1 Thessalonians 4:13?

“Those that have fallen asleep” refers to those that have died. We will see in 2 Thessalonians that the Thessalonian Christians thought Christ's return was imminent. They were concerned that their loved ones that had passed away had missed Jesus' coming and would not be with them in heaven. You can imagine how heartbreaking this idea would be!

What does Paul tell them in 1 Thessalonians 4:14 to placate their fears?

What details does Paul give about the final resurrection in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17?

Their loved ones would not miss Christ's coming; in fact, Paul says that they will be the first to meet Jesus in the clouds. This must have been an incredibly joyful realization for the Thessalonians, just as it should be for us! Sometimes it is easy to get caught up in the daily grind and forget the ultimate goal. We should never forget to focus on heaven.

What statement does Paul make in 1 Thessalonians 4:18?

How would they have been able to use these words as comfort?



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How can focusing on Christ's return give us comfort today?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

Paul continues to discuss Christ's return, but now switches to a different angle. The focus turns from their loved ones toward their own preparation.

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:2, how will the judgement day come?

What is the judgment day compared to in 1 Thessalonians 5:3?

What is it about a thief and a pregnant woman that Paul is comparing to the coming of Christ?

The thought of Christ's return is simultaneously joyful and sobering at the same time. The moment we hear those trumpets sound it will be too late for so many; there will be no second chance. Paul wants them to fully grasp the gravity of the fact that this could happen at any moment. This doesn't have to be something we dread, but it should be a constant

consideration as we focus on living our life for Christ.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

What does Paul call the Christians in Thessalonica in 1 Thessalonians 5:5?

Paul does not want to cause them to doubt their salvation. Here he reassures them that they are sons of light and as such the coming of Christ won't "overtake [them] like a thief." He does, however, want to issue a warning about the darkness that surrounds them.

What does Paul say that the others do in 1 Thessalonians 5:6?

In this same verse what does he command the Thessalonians to do?

Those who are asleep in these verses are different than the faithful who are sleeping in the previous passage. This is referencing those of the world that are sleeping and not alert when the Lord comes. In contrast to those sleeping, we are to be alert and sober. Alert (GREGOREO) means to stay awake and be watchful or to be in constant readiness. Sober (NEPHO) isn't simply the act of abstaining from alcohol, it holds the more general meaning of being self-controlled and well-balanced.



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How can maintaining these qualities of alertness and sobriety prepare us for the judgement day?

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:8 what does being sober entail?

This is not the only place Paul discusses battle gear; war is one of his favorite analogies. Just like in battle, we should never allow ourselves to be caught off guard. This spiritual armor will ensure that we are ready for whatever the enemy throws our way.

In what ways does faith protect and prepare us for the judgement day?

How does love assist us in preparing for Christ's return?

How does the hope of salvation act as a helmet for us in this battle?

How is 1 Thessalonians 5:8 similar to 1 Thessalonians 1:3?

These three qualities, faith, hope, and love, are some of the main virtues that Paul focuses on in his letters. Maintaining these in abundance will cause many of the other specific issues he addresses to solve themselves. In the beginning of the letter we see that these were qualities the Thessalonians already had; here, he is encouraging them to continue to develop them. Many times in our Christian lives we become too comfortable and we feel as if there are certain things we have mastered. While we are hopefully growing and maturing each day, there will never be a day where we can stop progressing in our faith, hope, and love.

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 what has God destined us for?

Here Paul includes one more assurance for the Christians in Thessalonica. His greatest hope for this congregation is that he will see them in heaven. If they continue the path that they are on and remain standing firm amidst the darkness, Paul promises that they will reach their heavenly home and see the faithful that they love once again.



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What is Paul's admonition in 1 Thessalonians 5:11?

Paul understands that in the situation they find themselves in, standing firm would often require support. Encourage (PARAKALEO) literally means to "call to one's side." Build up (OIKODOMEO) is a carpenter's term used for shoring up a structure to make it sturdier. They were to continually be by each other's side offering aid and support.

In what ways have you been successful at offering someone this support?

What are some ways that you could improve?

Who is one person you can reach out to this week and how will you do it?

This encouragement is one of the main purposes of God's church. We must be a support system for one another. In our "mind your own business" society this is not always an easy thing. We must continually be working to break down the barriers and reach into people's lives.