HOLD THE LINE - 1 THESSALONIANS

We want to encourage each other to be on mission to our non-Christian friends, family and contacts.

Who are you on mission to?
Make a list and start praying for them (and yourself).

Pray for three friends, once a week, for one minute (3-1-1).

List the names of your family and friends here:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Week Passage

1 Acts 17:1-15
2 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
3 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12
4 1 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5
5 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13
6 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12
7 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
8 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
9 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22
10 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28
How to use this book:

1. PERSONAL READING
   - Use this guide to help you read your Bible every day.
   - Scribble down your thoughts and questions each day, and remember to pray and ask God to speak to you by His Spirit, through His Word.

2. GROWTH GROUPS
   - Take this guide with you to your Growth Group each week so you can write down prayer points that come from the study that week and prayer requests from the members of your group.
   - Let your group know who you are on mission to.

3. CHURCH
   - Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church.
   - Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided.

SIGN UP FOR THESE NOTES AS A DAILY EMAIL AT: 
www.evchurch.info/series

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INTRODUCTION: 1 THESSALONIANS

After the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), Paul once again set out from Antioch, this time with Silas, on his “second missionary journey”. They met Timothy in Derbe and took him along with them (Acts 16:3). In addition to revisiting some of the churches he had established on his first missionary journey, Paul also ventured into new areas to preach the gospel.

After being imprisoned in Philippi, Paul and his companions came to Thessalonica where they preached the gospel in the Jewish synagogue on three Sabbath days (Acts 17:2). 1 Thessalonians 2:7-11 tells us that Paul had time to work in Thessalonica, and Philippians 4:16 tells us that the Philippian church partnered in Paul’s ministry by sending him aid in Thessalonica. So while Paul’s stay appears to be longer than three weeks, it was nevertheless fairly short.

During the ministry of Paul, Silas and Timothy in Thessalonica a number of Thessalonians believed the gospel and a young church sprung into existence (see Acts 17:4 and 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10; 2:13). Paul’s stay in Thessalonica was ended by violent Jewish opposition. The persecution that broke out drove Paul and his companions to leave the Thessalonian church while it was in its infancy. The Jews from Thessalonica even followed Paul and his companions to Berea to stir up trouble for them there also.

Paul was anxious about the Thessalonians and whether they were standing firm in the faith (1 Thessalonians 3:5). He longed to see them, but it was not possible for him to return to them (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18), so he sent Timothy to find out how they were going and to strengthen and encourage them in their faith (1 Thessalonians 3:2-3).

1 Thessalonians was written on Timothy’s return to Paul with the good news that the Thessalonians were standing firm in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 3:6-8). Paul was overjoyed and wrote to encourage them to continue on in the faith.

Paul likely wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth a few months after he had planted the church there (around 50 A.D.). This makes it one of the earliest writings of the new Testament.

Despite the church’s infancy it was in many ways a model to other churches throughout Greece (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8). They were doing well: their turning to Christ had been genuine (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10) and they were growing in faith, hope and love (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Paul is greatly encouraged by how the church is going. However, being young in the faith it was a church that
had a lot yet to learn, and so Paul wrote to them regarding some issues about which they had questions or needed further instruction. He also wrote to spur them on to do what they had been doing more and more.

1 Thessalonians 4:1 is the hinge verse of the letter. For the first three chapters Paul has been speaking to the Thessalonians about the way they received the gospel, about his ministry among them, about his concern that they might not be standing firm in the faith, and about his great joy at Timothy’s report that they are indeed standing firm. In 1 Thessalonians 4:1 he says, “...we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.” They are a church that is going well, that is growing in holiness, and maturing in spite of persecution. But here Paul encourages them to do this “more and more”. The letter is like a big pat on the back that affirms how they have been living in order please God, and encourages them to keep pressing on.

The last two chapters of 1 Thessalonians contain a variety of instructions and teaching that Paul believes the Thessalonians need to hear in order to help them grow and mature further so that they might live increasingly to please God. It is likely that some of the instructions are in answer to questions the Thessalonians had for Paul, as passed on by Timothy, or at least areas in which Timothy observed the Thessalonians needed further instruction or teaching during his time with them.

Some of the big themes in the book of 1 Thessalonians are: the power of the Word of God (seen in its effect on the Thessalonians); how to do gospel ministry (as Paul defends his ministry); how to pastor people (seen in Paul’s intense concern for the Thessalonians); how to cope with suffering (seen in the Thessalonians’ response to persecution); how to live in order to please God; what will happen when the Lord returns; and how we should live in light of that day.

It is a rich and encouraging book. May the Lord enable us to live in order to please Him more and more as we study 1 Thessalonians!
The Bible is truly an extraordinary book, unique among all other books. It consists of 66 individual books, written by 40 different authors, in three different languages across 1,500 years of history. Yet for all of this diversity it contains a unified message that focuses on the coming of Jesus and the amazing salvation He offers through His death and resurrection!

The Bible contains words written by men in all the richness of literary types making it fun, challenging and enjoyable to dig into. Yet, at the same time, the Bible is also the very words of God given to us by His Spirit (1 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). These are not just words spoken in times past, but words that are alive for us to read today (Hebrews 4:12-13). The God of the universe actually addresses us today clearly in the pages of the Bible - amazing!

Jesus says the entire Bible points us to Him, that He is the focal point of it all. Listen to what He says, “He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (Luke 24:44). Or, again Jesus says, “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (John 5:39-40).

Knowing this is helpful in motivating us to read the Bible regularly, to keep building a bigger understanding of God’s purposes and how they are being fulfilled in Jesus. To help with this, the Daily Reading Notes now include an extra challenge: to read the whole Bible in two years. It’s totally optional, are you up for it?

There is a list of around 15 chapters of additional reading for each week of the term that will help you achieve this challenge. These readings can be done on whatever days work best and in whatever order you prefer to read them. At the end of each term you have a chance to catch up before the next term’s suggested readings begin again. You can also track your readings across the two years right here. Enjoy!

**YEAR 1: TERM 1**

Week 1  Genesis 1-5; Psalms 1-4; Genesis 5-10; Matthew 1-2
Week 2  Genesis 11-15; Psalms 5-7; Genesis 16-20; Matthew 3-4
Week 3  Genesis 21-25; Psalms 8-10; Genesis 26-30; Matthew 5-6
Week 4  Genesis 31-35; Psalms 11-16; Genesis 36-40; Matthew 7-9
YEAR 1: TERM 2

Week 5  Genesis 41-45; Psalms 17-19; Genesis 46-50; Matthew 10-11
Week 6  Exodus 1-5; Psalms 20-24; Exodus 6-10; Matthew 12-13
Week 7  Exodus 11-15, Psalms 25-27; Exodus 16-20; Matthew 14-15
Week 8  Exodus 21-25; Psalms 28-31; Exodus 26-30; Matthew 16-17
Week 9  Exodus 31-35; Psalms 32-34; Exodus 36-40; Matthew 18-19
Week 10  Leviticus 1-5; Psalms 35-37; Leviticus 6-10; Matthew 20-21

YEAR 1: TERM 3

Week 5  Judges 20-21; Ruth 1-4; 1 Samuel 1-4; Proverbs 12-14; Acts 23-24
Week 6  1 Samuel 5-14; Proverbs 15-17; Acts 25-26
Week 7  1 Samuel 15-24; Proverbs 18-20; Acts 27-28
Week 8  1 Samuel 25-31; 2 Samuel 1-3; Proverbs 21-22; Mark 1-2
Week 9  2 Samuel 4-13; Psalms 73-75; Mark 3-4
Week 10  2 Samuel 14-24; Psalms 76-77; Mark 5-6
READ THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

YEAR 1: TERM 4

Week 1 1 Kings 1-5; Psalms 78-80; 1 Kings 6-10; Mark 7-8
Week 2 1 Kings 11-15; Psalms 81-83; 1 Kings 16-20; Mark 9-10
Week 3 1 Kings 21-22; 2 Kings 1-8; Psalms 84-86; Mark 11-12
Week 4 2 Kings 9-13; Psalms 87-89; 2 Kings 14-18; Mark 13-14
Week 5 2 Kings 19-25; 1 Chronicles 1-3; Psalms 90-93; Mark 15-16
Week 6 1 Chronicles 4-8; Psalms 94-96; 1 Chronicles 9-13; Romans 1-2
Week 7 1 Chronicles 14-18; Psalms 97-101; 1 Chronicles 19-23; Romans 3-4
Week 8 1 Chronicles 24-29; Psalms 102-104; Romans 5-6
Week 9 2 Chronicles 1-5; Psalms 105-106; 2 Chronicles 6-10; Romans 7-8
Week 10 2 Chronicles 11-15; Proverbs 23-25; 2 Chronicles 16-20; Romans 9-10

YEAR 2: TERM 1

Week 1 2 Chronicles 21-25; Proverbs 26-28; 2 Chronicles 26-30; Romans 11-12
Week 2 2 Chronicles 31-36; Ezra 1-4; Proverbs 29-31; Romans 13-14
Week 3 Ezra 5-10; Nehemiah 1-4; Psalms 107-109; Romans 15-16
Week 4 Nehemiah 5-13; Psalms 110-113; 1 Corinthians 1-2
Week 5 Esther 1-10; Psalms 114-117; 1 Corinthians 3-4
Week 6 Job 1-5; Psalms 118; Job 6-10; 1 Corinthians 5-6
Week 7 Job 11-15; Psalms 119:1-48; Job 16-20; 1 Corinthians 7-8
Week 8 Job 21-25; Psalms 119:49-96; Job 26-30; 1 Corinthians 9-10
Week 9 Job 31-35; Psalms 119:97-144; Job 36-40; 1 Corinthians 11-12
Week 10 Job 41-42; Ecclesiastes 1-8; Psalms 119:145-176; 1 Corinthians 13-14

YEAR 2: TERM 2

Week 1 Ecclesiastes 9-12; Song of Songs 1-5; Psalms 120-122; 1 Cor 15-16
Week 2 Songs of Songs 6-8; Isaiah 1-7; Psalms 123-125; Luke 1-2
Week 3 Isaiah 8-12; Psalms 126-130; Isaiah 13-17; Luke 3-4
Week 4 Isaiah 18-22; Psalms 131-135; Isaiah 23-27; Luke 5-6
Week 5 Isaiah 28-32; Psalms 136-138; Isaiah 33-37; Luke 7-8
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**YEAR 2: TERM 3**

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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Ezekiel 21-25; Colossians 1-4; Ezekiel 26-30</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Ezekiel 41-48; 1 Timothy 1-6; 2 Timothy 1-4</td>
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**YEAR 2: TERM 4**

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<td>Micah 1-7; Nahum 1-3; Jude; Revelation 1-5</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Malachi 1-4; John 18-21</td>
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The book of Acts provides us with some helpful background to 1 Thessalonians.

DAY 1

Read Acts 17:1-9

1. What did Paul do when he arrived in Thessalonica?

2. In your own words, what was the message Paul preached? (Verses 2-3)

3. What were the different reactions to Paul’s message? What sort of reactions should we expect as we share the gospel? (Verses 4-9; see also Acts 17:32-34)

Prayer: Pray that you would be bold in proclaiming Jesus as the king who suffered and rose from the dead, expecting a variety of reactions from hostility to conversion.
DAY 2

Read Acts 17:10-15

1. Paul travelled to Berea. What did he do when he got there? Considering what had just occurred in Thessalonica, what does this show us about Paul?

2. What attitude did the Bereans have towards Paul and the Scriptures? How can you be more like the Bereans in this way?

3. When the Jews in Thessalonica learnt that Paul was preaching the Word of God in Berea, what did they do? What does this show about them and about the nature of some opposition to the gospel?

Prayer: Pray that you would be someone with a growing hunger to read the Bible more and would check everything you hear and think against it.
DAY 3

Read Acts 17:1-15

1. What do you learn about Paul’s relationship with the Thessalonians? (See also 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18; 2:7-11 and Philippians 4:15-16)
   a. How long was he with them?
   b. What impact did they have on his heart?
   c. What challenges did they face?

2. Given Paul was only with the Thessalonians for a short time, how does his heart for them challenge you today?


Prayer: Thank God that His Spirit-empowered Word is unstoppable, bringing salvation to the ends of the earth in spite of opposition.
DAY 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 1-3

1. What themes or ideas do you notice in the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians?

2. What strikes you from these chapters?

Prayer: Give thanks that God has enabled you to accept the Word of God as it actually is, “the Word of God,” which is at work in us who believe.
DAY 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 4-5

1. What themes or ideas do you notice in the last two chapters of 1 Thessalonians?

2. What strikes you from these chapters?

Prayer: Pray that as we study Thessalonians, God would awaken in you a deep passion for holiness, and a strong expectation of the return of the Lord Jesus.
PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES
WEEK 2: 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10

DAY 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3

1. Who wrote 1 Thessalonians and to whom was it written?

2. When was 1 Thessalonians written? (Think through the movement of Paul and his companions in the following verses to answer the question: Acts 17:13-15; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2; Acts 18:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 3:6)

3. What does it mean that the church of the Thessalonians is in “God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”? What sort of relationship do we as individuals and as a church have with God?

Prayer: Praise God that He has gathered us to Himself and each other in Jesus.
DAY 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3

1. What three things are Paul, Silas, and Timothy thankful for? What do you reckon they mean?

2. What connection does Paul draw between the following:
   a. work and faith? (compare with James 2:14-19)
   b. labour and love? (compare with 1 John 3:16-18; 5:3)
   c. endurance and hope? (compare with 2 Corinthians 4:13-18)

3. What is one way that you can better display a life of faith, love or hope in your everyday life in the coming week?

Prayer: Pray that Jesus might grow you in faith that works, love that labours and hope that endures.
DAY 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

1. In verse 4, Paul says, “For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you...”. How does Paul know that the Thessalonians have been loved and chosen by God? (Verses 4-6)

2. How did the Thessalonians respond to the message of the gospel? How did their reception of the gospel affect their lives? (Verses 5-6)

3. When we share the gospel with people, is it merely with words? How does this passage encourage you in sharing the gospel?

Prayer: Praise God for choosing you in love to be His, and enabling you to accept the gospel message with joy. Pray that you might share the gospel with family and friends, and that it might come to them with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.
DAY 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

1. In verse 7, Paul describes the Thessalonians as a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. In what way did the converted Thessalonians become role models to other believers?

2. What has happened as a result of the Thessalonians’ response to the gospel? (Verses 7-10) How has the gospel “rung out” from Thessalonica?

3. The Thessalonians’ faith, love, and hope impacted greatly on how they lived. They were changed so radically by the gospel that people “everywhere” talked to each other about it (1 Thessalonians 1:8-10). In what places and at what times of the week are you most recognisable as a Christian, and in what places and at what times in your week are you least recognisable as a Christian?

4. What must we do to be Christian models worth imitating? The Thessalonian church had a major impact on the world around them. What must we do as individuals and as a church to have a similar impact on the world around us?

Prayer: Pray that we as individuals and as a church would be so radically changed by the gospel that we would be a model for other Christians to copy, and that the Lord’s message would ring out from us across the coast.
DAY 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

1. What does verse 10 tell us about Jesus?

2. Verses 9-10 are a good description of how someone becomes a Christian. From these verses, what must someone do to become a Christian?

3. The Thessalonian church turned to God from idols (Verse 9). What do you think are idols in Australia today? What things are you tempted to serve or depend on before God?

4. In verse 10, Paul describes the Thessalonians as “waiting for his Son.” What does it mean practically to be “waiting for Jesus?”

Prayer: Pray that you might continue to live as you were saved: continually turning away from idols to serve the living and true God in greater and greater degrees, and having an eager and growing expectation of the coming of Jesus.
PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES
In chapter 1 we saw how the Thessalonian church was a model worth imitating. In chapter 2 we find another valuable model in Paul (and his companions).

**DAY 1**

**Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6**

1. In verses 1-16, Paul recounts his “mission” in Thessalonica. What does Paul say about the circumstances that surrounded his “mission” and how did he respond to these circumstances? (Verse 2)

2. In verse 2, Paul recounts how he and his companions continued preaching the gospel despite the opposition and persecution that they were facing. What things or situations make you reluctant to share the gospel with other people? How can we be more like Paul and his companions in these circumstances?

**Prayer:** Pray that the Lord would make you bold like Paul and his companions.
DAY 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6

1. What do we learn from verses 3-6 about Paul’s:
   a. message?
   b. motives in ministry?
   c. methods in ministry?

2. How should Paul’s example shape the way we and our church are involved in sharing the gospel?

3. Some people today want to argue that in ministry “the end justifies the means,” that it is okay to do anything to bring people into the church. Considering Paul’s example, why is it important to consider the methods that we use in ministry?

4. Why is it important to examine our own motives in ministry? What can we do about impure motives that we might have?

Prayer: Pray that we would be a church that ministers with integrity, sharing the gospel entrusted to us with motives and actions that please God. Pray also for your own motives in serving Christ and His church.
DAY 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:6-12

1. In verses 7 and 11, Paul uses the images of both a mother and a father relating to a child to describe the way he dealt with the Thessalonians. What do these images and verses tell us about Paul’s ministry to the Thessalonians?

2. What are some practical ways that we can act like Paul, as a “mother” and “father,” to those Christians around us?

3. This week, who are you going to seek to:
   a. encourage?
   b. comfort?
   c. urge on?

Prayer: Pray that the Lord would give you people who you can minister to and pray that you would deal with them with care and gentleness as you encourage, comfort, and urge them to live lives worthy of God.
DAY 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:6-12

1. Why did Paul work so hard “day and night” while he was with the Thessalonians (verses 9-12)? You might also want to look at 1 Corinthians 9:7-12. How might we imitate this principle of Paul’s in the ministry of our church, and in our own personal ministry?

2. What did Paul and his companions share with the Thessalonians? (Verse 8) What does this teach us about the nature of gospel ministry?

3. In verse 10, Paul speaks of his life lived in the presence of the Thessalonians as he shared his life with them. Why is the way we live so important for our witness to the gospel? What areas of your life might be a hindrance to your witnessing to friends and what can you do to change this?

Prayer: Pray that we would share our lives with our brothers and sisters, especially if we have a position of leadership, and that as we do so we would seek to live holy, righteous and blameless lives.
DAY 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Six times in this passage Paul makes clear that he is recalling for the Thessalonians things they already know regarding his mission in Thessalonica (2:1, 2:2, 2:5, 2:9, 2:10, 2:11). All this leads us to ask why Paul reminds the Thessalonians of these things.

1. Acts 17:1-15 tells of Paul’s time in Thessalonica. Now in 1 Thessalonians Paul is writing to the Thessalonians for perhaps the first time since he left. Under what circumstances did Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica end?

2. In 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16, Paul appears to be defending his ministry in Thessalonica. Assuming we are hearing Paul’s responses to accusations which have filtered back to him, what sort of things were Paul’s “enemies” saying against him?

3. How does Paul defend his ministry? From this, what does Paul believe about when ministry is a success and when it is a failure?

Prayer: Pray for the leaders and members of our church that our ministry would be characterised by the true gospel message, by right motives, by a desire to please God, by gentle but strong leadership, by a desire to share life with each other, and by selfless, sacrificial service.
PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES
WEEK 4: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-3:5

DAY 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

1. The letter to the Thessalonians began with thanksgiving. What is Paul thankful for in verse 13?

2. How does Paul know that the Thessalonians received his gospel as “the word of God?” (Verse 13)

3. What does the fact that Paul calls the message he has spoken “the word of God” tell us about what Paul thinks of himself as an apostle?
   a. How can we hear the word of God today?
   b. When we faithfully teach the gospel today, who is actually speaking to those who hear us?
   c. How is this a challenge?
   d. How is this a comfort?

Prayer: Give thanks that in the Scriptures we have received the Word of God, and that God has enabled us to accept it as it is, the Word of God.
DAY 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

1. In chapter 1, Paul spoke of the Thessalonians as imitators of him and of the Lord (verse 6). Now in chapter 2, Paul says that the Thessalonians became imitators of “God’s churches in Judea” (2:14). In what way were the Thessalonians like these churches?

2. How is it that the persecutors of the Judean church can be said to “displease God” and to be “hostile to all men?”

3. If this is hostility, what is the most loving thing you can do for someone? Are you being loving in this way?

Prayer: Pray that God would enable those who are persecuted for believing the gospel to stand firm in Christ and not seek revenge. Pray that God would enable you to show the greatest love you can to people by sharing the gospel of salvation with them.
DAY 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5

1. From verses 17-20, why do you think Paul felt the way he did about the Thessalonians?

2. What did Paul invest himself in according to 2:17-20? Is this a good investment?

3. What are you investing yourself in? How is this seen in your life? Is it a good investment?

Prayer: Pray that God would enable you to make a deep and consistent investment in people and their faith in Christ. Pray that those you love and serve would be your glory and joy.
DAY 4
Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5

1. How is Timothy described? What does this teach us about our work in the gospel?

2. Why did Paul send Timothy to Thessalonica?

3. What is Paul’s big fear for the Thessalonians? What does this teach us about the value of faith?

Prayer: Pray that God would both impress upon you how precious your faith in Christ is and protect you from having your faith shaken or lost.
DAY 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5

1. What realities does Paul remind the Thessalonians of in verses 3-4? Are these realities for you?

2. Who is the great enemy of Christians? What is he seeking to do, and how does he do it?

3. In verse 5, Paul says when he “could stand it no longer” he sent Timothy to find out about their faith. What does this teach us about Paul? Is this how we feel about our Christian brothers and sisters? How could you cultivate this attitude?

Prayer: Pray that your heart would be filled with a deep love and concern for your Christian brothers and sisters, and a deep desire that they would not be tempted by the tempter, but would stand firm in their faith in God.
PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES
DAY 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10

1. Why did Paul send Timothy to Thessalonica? (Verses 1-5)

2. What news did Timothy bring about the Thessalonians on his return to Paul? (Verses 3:6-8)

3. How did Paul respond to Timothy’s report about the Thessalonians, and what does this show about him? (Verses 3:7-13)

4. Deep down (where it is possible to be unconcerned or even jealous) how do you respond when you hear other Christians are going well in the faith?

Prayer: Pray for a joyful heart that is glad for others who are continuing strongly in their faith in God, even those who have hurt you.
DAY 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10

1. Thinking back to yesterday, what effect did Timothy’s report have on Paul and his companions? (Verses 6-10)

2. In verse 8, Paul says, “now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.” This makes it sound like he almost couldn’t go on living if they had given up on Jesus. How is Paul’s love and concern for the Thessalonians throughout this passage a challenge to our love and concern for others?

3. Following Paul’s example, in what ways could you better look out for your Christian brothers and sisters?

Prayer: Pray that God would place in your heart a deep love, care and concern for your Christian brothers and sisters so that their progress in the faith would be of great importance to you.
DAY 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

1. Why was the opinion of the Thessalonians (verse 6) so important to Paul both as a man and as an apostle? When we care about what people think of us, is it for the same reasons?

2. Paul made clear that he wanted to visit the Thessalonians personally but couldn’t (2:17-18), and so he sent Timothy in his place (3:1-2). But even after this, in his prayer (3:11), he shows that he still wants to visit them. Why is it so important to Paul that he can come to them personally?

3. What does Paul’s desire to visit them personally teach us about ministry? How can communication technology (e.g. smart phones, email, social media etc.) be helpful in ministry, and how can it be a threat to healthy ministry?

Prayer: Ask God to give you opportunities to personally encourage and minister to people.
DAY 4
Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

1. Our prayers show what is dear to our hearts. What does Paul’s prayer show is dear to his heart? What are his big goals?

2. Are these your goals for yourself? Do you pray for them?

3. Which of these things should you desire and pray for more for others?

Prayer: Pray that God would constantly reshape your goals to be in line with His goals. Pray to grow in love and holiness for yourself and others.
DAY 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

1. How can these verses guide our prayers?

2. Use these verses to write a prayer in your own words.

Prayer: Pray your prayer for our church. Pray it for one other person.
WEEK 6: 1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

In the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians, Paul has recalled his history with the Thessalonians, speaking of how they received the gospel and how they continue to stand firm in the faith. In chapters 4 and 5, Paul moves on to instructing the Thessalonians in how to continue to live pleasing God in various areas of life, including reshaping their thinking about the second coming of Christ.

DAY 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2

1. Before this letter, what instructions have Paul and his companions given the Thessalonians, and on whose authority? Where do we need to look to find out what pleases God?

2. What does it mean to please God? Is it your life’s goal to “live in order to please God”? What areas in life do you need to apply this to that you haven’t yet?

3. What does Paul ask and urge the Thessalonians to do? Are there any areas in your life where you have stopped moving forward, and need to seek to please God in this area “more and more”?

Prayer: Pray that God would place in your heart a deep desire to please Him by living a holy life in every way, and that He would give you the day-to-day strength to live this out.
DAY 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

1. “What is God’s will for my life?” is a question people often ask. What is God’s will for the Thessalonians and for us? (Verse 3)

2. How are Christians not to use their bodies and sexual desires, and how are they to use them? (Verses 3-8) How does this challenge you?

3. What are the reasons that Paul gives in this passage for living this way?

4. What is Paul referring to when he speaks of “God calling us”? (Verse 7; see also 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9; Jude 1) What is your calling?

Prayer: Pray that you would be obedient to the will of God and be holy, especially in the area of sexuality. Ask for forgiveness and healing for where you have sinned in this area.
Prayer: Ask for forgiveness for the times you haven’t shown love to Christians you know. Ask God to strengthen you through His Spirit to love one another “more and more”.

DAY 3
Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

1. What is “love for one another” and why does Paul not need to write to the Thessalonians about this?

2. What does Paul urge them to do?

3. The Thessalonians were a church who loved each other. They also loved those even further away, “God’s family throughout Macedonia.” How would our church be different if we loved each other as the Thessalonians did?


**DAY 4**

**Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12**

1. What ambition are the Thessalonians to have? Are your ambitions for life the same as God’s ambitions for your life?

2. The issues spoken about in these verses continue to be a problem for the Thessalonians after this letter and so Paul writes about them in his second letter (2 Thessalonians). Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15. With this passage in mind, what does it mean to lead a “quiet life,” what does it look like to “mind your own business”, and what does it mean to work with your hands?

3. From verse 12, what results will Paul’s instructions in verse 11 achieve? Who are the outsiders who are watching your life?

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**Prayer:** Pray that God would enable you to lead a calm and settled life rather than one that is restless. Pray that He would enable you to be helpful to others but not interfering, hard working and not idle.
DAY 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

1. What areas of life are covered by these instructions, and what does this show us about the Christian life?

2. Twice in this passage Paul says that the Thessalonians are living as he had taught them (verses 1 and 10). He goes on to urge them to “do so more and more.” What does this teach us about the Christian life?

3. What is the connection between this passage and the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians?

Prayer: Pray that God would place in us a strong desire to press on in Christ, growing in holiness and living a life pleasing to Him.
In these verses, Paul seems to be addressing an issue in the Thessalonian church. It appears that members of the church were dying and the Lord had not yet returned, and so the Thessalonians were worried that those Christians who had died would in some way miss out when Christ did return.

**DAY 1**

**Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

1. Why does it seem Paul has written this part of the letter? (Verses 13 and 18)

2. Who are those “who fall asleep,” and why are they described like this? See verse 14; Philippians 1:21-24; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. It is unlikely that Paul is teaching that our souls sleep between our death and Jesus’ second coming. He has something else in mind.

**Prayer:** Give thanks that when we die in Christ we go to be with Him, which is better by far, even as we wait for the resurrection of the dead and our full resurrection existence in the new creation.
DAY 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

1. How does the world grieve for those who have died?

2. How is it to be different for the Christian, and why?

3. As you reflect on your approaching death, how firm is your hope of an eternal future with Jesus? What is your hope based on?

Prayer: Pray that you would have a strong hope in your eternal future with Christ that He has won for you by His death and resurrection.
DAY 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

1. Will those “in Christ” miss out in any way when Jesus returns? (Verse 15)

2. What should a Christian attitude to death be? (See John 11:35; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Philippians 1:21, 1:23-24, 2:27)

3. From 1 Thessalonians 1:3, what will be the fruit of real hope? Do you see this fruit growing in your life?

Prayer: Pray that the Lord would enable you to see death rightly, seeing the victory and joy it is to go to be with Christ even amid the sorrow and pain that death brings. Pray that your hope would bear the fruit of endurance, pressing on in Christ through all circumstances of life.
DAY 4
Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

1. What do verses 16-17 tell us about Jesus’ return?

2. How do verses 16-17 make you feel? How do you think they should make you feel?

Prayer: Give thanks that Jesus will come again in a way that no one can miss or avoid, coming in victory, wrapping up history, handing out perfect judgment, rooting out all evil, bringing in the new creation. Pray that you would be filled with longing for this day.
DAY 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

1. What is the one destiny of both those who “have fallen asleep” and those who “are left”? (Verse 17)

2. What does this teach us about the focus of our hope? Is this what you are eager for?

3. How can you grow your desire for Jesus to return?

Prayer: Pray that day by day you would grow in your desire for Jesus to return so that you can be with the Lord forever.
1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 is dealing with the second coming of Jesus and its implications. The first section (4:13-18) is answering a question something like “What happens to Christians who have died when Jesus returns?” While 5:1-11 is answering a question like “When will Jesus return?”.

**DAY 1**

**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3**

1. What is the world’s view of the future?

2. What do verses 1-3 teach us about when Jesus’ return will be, and how it will come?

3. What is a Christian attitude to the future? (See also 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18.)

**Prayer:** Pray that the Lord would enable you to live with a strong expectation of Jesus’ return, with this reality shaping your daily life.
DAY 2
Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5

1. Paul divides all of humanity into two categories using light/dark, day/night imagery. What does it mean to be “children of” something, and so who are these two groups of people?

2. Is this how you think of humanity (especially people you know), as being in one of these two categories?

3. Who will be surprised by the day, and who won’t?

Prayer: Pray for your family and friends who are not yet prepared to meet the Lord.
DAY 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:6-11

1. Verse 6 starts with “So then”. In light of the fact that Jesus is coming and the Thessalonians are “children of the day” (verse 5), how should they (and we) live?

2. What does it mean to “awake and sober”, and why is this the only appropriate way for Christians to live?

3. Paul uses the soldier image to teach us how to be “awake and sober.” What three things are we to put on?

4. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:3. At the beginning of the letter Paul thanked God for the outworking of the Thessalonians’ faith, hope and love, but here he urges them to put on these very same things. What does this teach us about the Christian life?

**Prayer:** Pray that you might live as a child of the day, awake and sober, growing continually in faith, love and hope.
DAY 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:6-11

1. We have a great hope of salvation. What is our salvation based on, and how has it been won?

2. It is possible to read passages like 5:6-8 and 5:12-22 and slip into thinking that we earn our salvation by how we live. How do verses 9-11 help us with this?

3. Should knowing that we are “not appointed to suffer wrath” but rather will “live together with Him” (Jesus) because of Christ’s death, motivate us or de-motivate us from living a godly life?

Prayer: Ask God for forgiveness for the many times when you have not lived “together with Jesus”, but your actions have looked more like they belong to the darkness. Give thanks for your salvation won by the death of Jesus.
Prayer: Give thanks to God for giving us a Christian family to love and encourage us. Pray that we might encourage others, especially with the truths of Jesus’ second coming, and in light of the urgency it brings.

WEEK 8: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11

DAY 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 started by answering a question the Thessalonians had about the coming of Jesus and ended with the words “Therefore encourage one another with these words” (verse 18).

1. What should a true knowledge of Jesus’ return do for us?

2. In light of Jesus’ return, what should we do for others? How does the fact that Jesus is returning make it more urgent to encourage and build one another up?

3. If you knew Jesus was returning in the next month, how would you live differently to the way you are currently living?
PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES
DAY 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

1. In verses 12-22, Paul gives the Thessalonians a list of instructions. What are the key topics he raises in the final part of his letter?

2. We need to do all these things. Which ones do you find easiest to obey and which one do you find hardest to obey?

3. Which instruction jumps out at you the most as something that you need to work on?

Prayer: Pray that the Lord would show how you can live a more obedient and holy life among the community of believers.
Prayer: Pray for the leaders of our church, that they might be humble servants who work hard among God’s people as they do the work of admonishing. Pray that you might respect, hold in high regard, and love your leaders.
Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15

1. In verses 14-15, Paul speaks about how members of the church family are to treat each other. From verse 14, who are the idle, the timid and the weak, and how are we to treat each group of people?

2. In verse 15, there are two instructions. What are the instructions, and which do you find easier, to retaliate or to do good?

3. How do you respond when someone wrongs you? Is there anyone in our church that you are holding a grudge against?

Prayer: Pray that the Lord would enable you to be proactive in being kind and loving to people, and that equally He would enable you not to retaliate, hold grudges, or repay people when they wrong you.
DAY 4
Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

1. How are the three commands in verses 16 and 17 linked, and what is the secret to them?

2. What reasons do the Thessalonians and we have for being so full of joy and thanks (see also 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)?

3. What does it mean that “this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”?

4. How can you be more joyful, prayerful and thankful this week?

Prayer: Rejoice in your salvation. Pray for something that concerns you. Give thanks for something the Lord has done for you.
DAY 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

For more information on New Testament prophecy see the appendix at the back of the daily reading notes.

1. What do you think it means to “quench the Spirit”, and, considering the context, how would you make sure you didn’t do this?

2. Verses 19-22 seem to be primarily about prophecy, and in these verses it seems that when there is a prophecy it should be tested. From verses 20-22, how are we to deal with New Testament prophecy? (See also 1 Corinthians 14:29; 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 9-10.)

3. What do you think obedience to verses 19-22 might look like today?

Prayer: Pray that God would mature you in your understanding of His Word so that any time someone shares with you something that they consider to be from God (whether wisdom, guidance, teaching, sermon, prophesy, vision etc.) you would not treat it with contempt, but rather test it to see if it is in line with God’s Word.
DAY 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

1. In verses 23-24, what is Paul praying for? What does this show about Paul and his deepest concerns?

2. Is your great desire for yourself and others to be “sanctified through and through?”

3. Why is Paul confident of an answer to this prayer? What had they been called to?

Prayer: Pray that the Lord might put in your heart a deep desire for yourself and others to be holy and blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus. Thank God that He is faithful in His plan for us: to make us holy.
Prayer: Give thanks that we have the Word of God to read, as God has preserved His Word that was written by the apostles in letters like 1 Thessalonians. Give thanks that we can pray, and that prayer is powerful and effective.

DAY 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

1. In verse 25, Paul asks for prayer. What does this show about him and about prayer? How would this request encourage the Thessalonians?

2. What does verse 27 show about what Paul thought of his words in this letter?

3. In verse 28, Paul finishes with a little prayer. What is “grace,” and what is he asking for them? Is this what you desire and pray for others?

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS
Malachi 1-4; John 18-21
DAY 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 1-3

1. Thinking back over the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians, what things reshaped, challenged or sharpened your thinking?

2. Thinking back over the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians, in what ways were you challenged to change your life?

3. How have you gone in working on these areas?

Prayer: Pray that God might continue to use your time in 1 Thessalonians to re-mould your thinking long after you have finished studying it this time around.
DAY 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 4-5

1. Thinking back over the last two chapters of 1 Thessalonians, what things reshaped, challenged or sharpened your thinking?

2. Thinking back over the last two chapters of 1 Thessalonians, in what ways were you challenged to change your life?

3. How have you gone in working on these areas?

Prayer: Ask God to help us be a church that stands firm, lives to please God more and more, and sounds forth the word of the Lord.
WEEK 10: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-28

DAY 5

Read 2 Thessalonians

1. What themes or ideas do you notice in Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians?

2. Are there any themes and ideas that flow on from 1 Thessalonians?

3. What strikes you from 2 Thessalonians?

Prayer: Ask God to help you stand firm and hold to the teachings of the apostles, while you wait for the Lord Jesus to be revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels.
APPENDIX - NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

The gift of prophecy seen in the New Testament is different from prophecy in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament God spoke to His people through prophets, and the words of God’s prophets came with God’s authority. The prophets themselves were aware of this, saying things like “This is what the LORD says...”. In the Old Testament there are also strong warnings against false prophecy, with the penalty being death.

In the New Testament, it is the apostles (those chosen by Jesus to be witnesses of His life, death and resurrection and to have the ministry of speaking and writing with His authority) who take on the prophet’s role of proclaiming the Word of the Lord, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The message spoken by the apostles was one that could not be changed in any way (Galatians 1:6-9) for it comes from God. For Paul, the legitimate heirs and successors of the Old Testament prophets, in terms of authority, were not New Testament prophets, but the apostles.

The essence of prophecy throughout the Bible is not prediction of the future so much as revelation of the mind and will of God. In the New Testament, prophecy is described as being for the “strengthening, encouragement and comfort” of the church (1 Corinthians 14:3). It is a means of building up Christian character, of encouraging and strengthening people, and of giving them comfort in their distress (of course prophecy is not the only gift that does these things).

Prophecy involves speaking to people (1 Corinthians 14:3), in a way that they can understand (in contrast to tongues). It appears to involve receiving a revelation, that is it comes from God (1 Corinthians 14:30). In other words it appears that the “information” contained in the prophecy is not from study but revelation.

This connection of prophecy to “revelation” makes many Christians nervous since it appears to place the gift of “prophecy” on the same level as the inspired Word of God (which came through the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles). But Paul makes clear in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians that such an assessment of prophecy is not appropriate. Paul obviously believes that the gift of prophecy is revelatory (1 Corinthians 14:30); but this does not lead him to regard the authority of the prophets as absolute. This is most clear in Paul’s instructions regarding the “weighing” of prophecy.
in 1 Corinthians 14:29 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 (compare Paul’s attitude to his own words and his placement of the “prophets” under his own authority in 1 Corinthians 14:37-38). Prophecy is expected to be mixed in quality and must be tested against God’s revealed Word in the Scriptures. Clearly then it does not carry the same authority as those Scriptures.

The fact that the gift of prophecy depends on revelation does not limit us to a form of revelation that threatens the finality of the Bible. In fact the use of “revelation” language in the Scriptures is much broader than we tend to think. So for example, when Peter makes his confession at Caesarea Philippi, he has to be told that the Father had revealed this truth to him (Matthew 16:17) - in other words revelation can take place without the individual knowing that it is taking place or has taken place. Furthermore 1 Corinthians 2:10 speaks of the revelation that comes to all those God chooses. Similarly in Ephesians 1:17 and 3:14-19 the concept of revelation appears associated with the Christian’s growing grasp of spiritual realities - a “growing grasp” that can come only through God’s grace. Therefore Paul’s reference to “revelation” in 1 Corinthians 14 does not mean that prophecy is necessarily authoritative, infallible, or Bible-threatening.

The authority of New Testament prophecy is only grounded in how faithfully it reflects the Word of God as found in the Scriptures.
Seth and Kate
Buddhist Asia
As the fourth largest religion in the world, Buddhism comprises 10% of the world’s population. The Buddhistic ‘Bonba’ people are gospel-zero. No gospel. No Bible. No church. No chance to hear about Jesus. Humanly speaking, not a hope in hell. So pray for Seth and Kate as they seek to plant churches in gospel-zero Buddhist Asia.

Kirstin Nepal
Kirstin has worked in Nepal as an Occupational Therapist for the last 7 years. She ministers in a Christian Hospital and has regular opportunities to share her faith and pray for patients. Thank God for the growing church in Nepal and pray for leadership development. Please continue to pray for Kirstin in this context, as she disciples women in her local church, and for her and Binay after their recent marriage.

Craig and Samantha McCorkindale
(CMS) Cambodia
Craig and Samantha (Hannah, Clare and Joel) are into their second year in Cambodia. They continue with more independent language learning in the community and Craig will be preparing lessons to teach in Khmer at the Phnom Peng Bible School later in 2018. Pray for continued relationships in their community as they share the love of Jesus there.

The Geneva Push
Australia
Geneva Push is an Australian Church Planting Network aiming to inspire, equip and unleash a new generation of church planters dedicated to evangelising churches into existence. Pray for the assessment process, provision of ongoing support and training through coaching, mentoring, and conferences to ensure the biggest impact as church planters.

Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
Australia
These churches are committed to praying for one another and continuing to promote planting of evangelical churches throughout Australia. Their pastors seek to provide support and encouragement to one another. FIEC is aiming, with God’s help, to plant 100 churches across Australia during the next 15 years.
Derek and Anna (OMF) Southeast Asia
Derek and Anna (Liam, Jasmine and Juliet) are working in theological education and cross-cultural worker mobilisation in Southeast Asia. Pray for Derek as he continues with his classes in a local Bible college and is starting to train people to reach out to minority ethnic groups where there is no church. They are also trying to reach out to their local community, developing friendships and reading the Bible with those interested.

Martin and Jen Shadwick (AFES) Newcastle University
Martin and Jen (with their 3 children) work with AFES discipling and training Christian students. Martin continues to work with both local and overseas students. Pray for wisdom in balancing ministry and family life, and for new partners to help them continue in this important ministry.

Nicole Berlach
Tuggerah Lakes Scripture Board (TLSB)
Nicole works with the TLSB teaching Year 11-12 Scripture. 3 days at The Entrance Campus. She also meets with students one-to-one and helps organise the FUSE camp for Christian students. Pray for Nicole and the team (also at Tumbi and Berkley Vale High Schools) as they share Jesus with young people who may not have heard.

Jono and Grace Wright (AIM) Cross cultural ministry in Australia
Jono and Grace Wright, with their kids, have been working amongst Aboriginals in Camooweal for the last 13 years. They are currently on a year’s sabbatical undertaking some further Biblical study and being refreshed for future ministry. Pray for the ministries continuing back in Camooweal, including the Sunday meetings, weekly Bible study groups and prayer meetings, Sunday School, Scripture in the local primary school, and weekend Bible schools.

Colin and Jill Bakon
(SIM) Church and Missionary Mobilisation
Colin’s two roles are in church mobilisation in Latin America where he is raising up national teams to run Kairos, with special focus this year on Ecuador and Peru. And he is working with a task force to mobilise for new initiatives within SIM to see work happening in areas where there is no church.
We are kicking off our Summer Series across all EV Growth Groups this term. *Summer Series* is a sermon series run over four weeks in January where we look at topics that might interest our non-Christian friends and family. BUT its in Term 3 and 4 that we survey people we know to find out which topics to do.

This year we are jumping back into a Summer Series theme we ran in 2011 –cause it was so good!

**QUESTIONS FOR GOD**

Out of all the Summer Series topics we have done over the last few years this has been the stand out when it comes to a survey question. We had heaps of engagement and many EV people said it created great opportunity for discussion and invitations in January.

What’s cool about this series is there is no wrong answer! We are going to get heaps of different ideas coming in and it will make for a very interesting series in January.

Asking people to think about a question for God should kick off lots of good conversations, will spark their interest in coming along and listening to one or more of the talks in January. It’s also just a great way to start talking to people about church.
...my church is wanting to put on a really interesting series of talks this coming January. It’s called “Top 4 Questions for God”. So... we’re asking as many people as we can, if they could ask God one question, what would it be? We’re going to take the top four asked questions and they will be the topics we look at in church throughout January.

WHO?
You could ask...

- People in your household
- Friends & Neighbours
- School or Workmates
- Sports team members

HOW?
You could use any of these methods...

- Online: PC, Phone, Tablet
  www.evchurch.info
- A printed Survey slip

Who are the people who you could ask the survey question to?
Pray for these survey conversations and opportunities to invite them to the Summer Series talks in January 2019.