

PRECEPT
UPON
PRECEPT

1 Thessalonians

1 THESSALONIANS

PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT

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HELPFUL STUDY TOOLS

ARTHUR, KAY

How to Study Your Bible Precept Upon Precept

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1994.

Greek Word Study Tools

Commentaries on I Thessalonians

(See commentary list below.)

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

BAXTER, J. SIDLOW

Explore the Book

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960.

MORRIS, LEON

Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: I & 2 Thessalonians

Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984

THOMAS, ROBERT L.; EARLE, RALPH; HIEBERT, D. EDMOND

Expositor's Bible Commentary: I, 2 Thessalonians; I, 2 Timothy; Titus

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996

WIERSBE, WARREN W.

Be Ready

Colorado Springs, Colorado: Chariot Victor Publishers, 1979

LESSON ONE

Overview

THIS LESSON
INCORPORATES

Observation Worksheets on 1 Thessalonians, located in the Appendix

“Go . . . and make disciples . . .” (Matthew 28:19). That is our Lord’s command. None who know and love God can avoid it!

Here is a book that will give the “how” to those who would obey. First Thessalonians: evangelism and discipleship in shoe-leather! This is just the book for you, Beloved, because you care enough to learn!

DAY
ONE
AND
DAY
TWO

Use your Observation Worksheets, located in the Appendix, this week. **Do not use any other study helps.**

Inductive Bible study begins with the Bible itself. It is finding out what the Bible says about itself. In inductive Bible study it is helpful that the book be surveyed as a whole before the dissection of the parts begins. In the dissection, you see will how the parts relate to the whole.

In this week’s lesson you will be doing an overview of 1 Thessalonians. You want to get an overall picture of the whole book before you begin to dissect it chapter by chapter. If you will do each section of your homework this week in a thorough manner, you will begin to see the framework of 1 Thessalonians. Every single part of the method used this week will reveal the message of the book to one depth or another.

1. As you begin to study any book of the Bible, you must remember that the Word of God is different from all other books ever written by man. The Bible is the Word of God recorded for us by men who were inspired of God to write the words and the truths of God’s choosing. Therefore, the truths of the Bible can be understood only through revelation. To understand the Bible, you must be taught by the Spirit. So as you begin each day’s study, ask God, by His Spirit, to open your eyes so that you might behold wondrous things from His Word. And do not forget, there is one

1 Thessalonians

Lesson 1, Overview

who would keep you from going forward; so put on your armor and stand against Satan's wiles, remembering you were born again to conquer!

2. If you have never done a Precept course before, read the sections "The Joy and Value of Inductive Study," "The Rule of Context — Context Rules," and "Getting the Big Picture" in *How to Study Your Bible Precept Upon Precept*.
3. In the Appendix you will find the book of 1 Thessalonians, double-spaced. Read through the book of 1 Thessalonians using these Observation Worksheets. Do not stop to ponder, question, or meditate. Simply sit down and read it as if it were a letter that had just come in the mail.
4. From your first reading, is this book history? prophecy? a letter?
5. People, places, and events are easy to see — obvious. In a letter the author is usually most obvious. Read through 1 Thessalonians again. Your purpose for reading this time is to learn what you can about the author, looking only for those facts that are obvious. You can learn a great deal about the author by asking the 5 W's and an H (who, what, when, where, why, and how). For example, who was the author, what did you learn about him, where is he, when, why, how? These are just a few questions to get you started. These facts can be seen by noticing that the author will refer to himself using the pronouns I, me, my, we, and us. Make a list of what you learn about the author. Don't panic if you do not find an answer to every one of the 5 W's and an H. Just record the obvious facts.

Read through 1 Thessalonians again looking for information about the recipients. Notice the pronouns you and your. Again, ask the 5 W's and an H; for example, to whom is he writing, what are their circumstances, where, when, why, how? Also, once again note only the obvious facts at this point. Make a list of what you learn.

6. Read through 1 Thessalonians again. Keeping in mind what you learned about the author and the recipients, what did you notice about the time in which they are living? This will give you information on the historical background of the book. Record what you glean regarding the historical background on the “1 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart, located at the end of the lesson. (Hint: Remember, the facts that you listed about Paul and the Thessalonians may reveal some of the facts concerning the historical background.)
7. What subjects does the author mention? Repeated words and phrases that show you the main ideas are called “key words.” We’ll look for those tomorrow.

DAY
THREE
AND
DAY
FOUR

1. Begin this study session by looking for the key words used throughout the book of 1 Thessalonians.

A key word is a word which the author uses repeatedly or which when removed from the text leaves the content devoid of meaning. When you look for key words, you will want to mark them on your Observation Worksheets. Key words can be marked in one of two ways:

- a. by coloring each use of the same word and its synonyms and pronouns in one color,
- b. by drawing a diagram around that particular word to distinguish it from others if no colored pencils are available.

Keeping in mind what you learned as you identified the author and recipients, read the book of 1 Thessalonians again. What words does the author repeat throughout the book? (Hint: Some of the key words appeared in your list of facts about the author and the recipients.) Mark these on your Observation Worksheets and record them on the “1 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart.

2. Next you want to discover the general subjects (themes) covered in 1 Thessalonians. What are some of the things that Paul talks about or seems to want to get across in this letter? Your key words will give you a clue to the general subjects. Read through 1 Thessalonians again looking for these general subjects and list them on the “1 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart.

3. As you read through 1 Thessalonians, look for Paul's purpose for writing. Many times the author will state his purpose for writing a book. In the book of 1 Thessalonians, however, the purpose is not clearly stated; therefore, it must be discerned by careful examination of the main theme of the book. As you look for this purpose, keep in mind that everything the author does throughout the book is designed to accomplish this purpose for writing. Once you see this purpose, you will be better equipped to understand the message of the book.

On the "1 Thessalonians at a Glance" chart, record the author's purpose for writing.

**DAY
FIVE**

The purpose of constructing an At a Glance chart is to see how the different parts (chapters) relate to the whole (book). The procedure for constructing a chart is really quite simple.

1. Pray.
2. Read, read, and reread the text.
3. Now you want to identify the major theme of the entire book. What is the most important subject in this book? Remember that the key words will give you a clue to the general subjects which in turn will show you what the theme of the book is. Record what you see as the major theme of the book of 1 Thessalonians on the "1 Thessalonians at a Glance" chart.
4. Now that you have identified the book theme, go back and see what each chapter tells you about that theme. Again, the key words will give you direction. As you identify the theme of each chapter, record it on the At a Glance chart. Use words directly from the text to reflect the main ideas in each chapter.

5. When you study a book, you may see a general or broad division of the book. For example, in the book of Romans chapters 1-11 are doctrinal; chapters 12-16 are practical. This is a segment division. A book might be divided according to
- dates,
 - places,
 - topics,
 - doctrines,
 - key thoughts,
 - reigns of kings,
 - personalities, and/or
 - major characters.

In shorter books, such as 1 Thessalonians, you may not find many clear segment divisions. Usually, however, the book can be divided by identifying the introduction, main body, and conclusion. Record these on your chart in the section labeled “Segment Divisions.”

1 THESSALONIANS AT A GLANCE

Book Theme

Chapter Themes

Segment Divisions

Author

1

Recipients

2

Purpose

Historical Background

3

4

Key Words

5

1 THESSALONIANS 1

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

PAUL and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in
God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

- ¶ 2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers;
- 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,
- 4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, *His* choice of you;
- 5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.
- 6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,
- 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.
- 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.
- 9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,
- 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 THESSALONIANS 2

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

- FOR you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,
- 2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.
- 3 For our exhortation does not *come* from error or impurity or by way of deceit;
- 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts.
- 5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed — God is witness —
- 6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.
- 7 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing *mother* tenderly cares for her own children.
- 8 Having thus a fond affection 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 very dear to us.
- 9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, *how* working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.
- 10 You are witnesses, and *so is* God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;
- 11 just as you know how we *were* exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father *would* his own children,

- 12 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.
- ¶ 13 And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.
- 14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they *did* from the Jews,
- 15 who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men,
- 16 hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.
- ¶ 17 But we, brethren, having been bereft of you for a short while — in person, not in spirit — were all the more eager with great desire to see your face.
- 18 For we wanted to come to you — I, Paul, more than once — and *yet* Satan thwarted us.
- 19 For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?
- 20 For you are our glory and joy.

1 THESSALONIANS 3

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

THEREFORE when we could endure *it* no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone;

2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,

3 so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.

4 For indeed when we were with you, we *kept* telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.

5 For this reason, when I could endure *it* no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain.

6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you,

7 for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith;

8 for now we *really* live, if you stand firm in the Lord.

9 For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account,

10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

- ¶ 11 Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you;
- 12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also *do* for you;
- 13 so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

1 THESSALONIANS 4
Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

FINALLY then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us *instruction* as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more.

2 For you know what commandments we gave you by *the authority* of the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

6 *and* that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the* avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned *you*.

7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.

8 Consequently, he who rejects *this* is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

¶ 9 Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

10 for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,

11 and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you;

12 so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

- ¶ 13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope.
- 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep 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, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.
- 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.
- 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.
- 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 THESSALONIANS 5

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

NOW as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.

2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief;

5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;

6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.

8 But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.

11 Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

¶ 12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,

- 13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.
- 14 And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.
- 15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men.
- 16 Rejoice always;
- 17 pray without ceasing;
- 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- 19 Do not quench the Spirit;
- 20 do not despise prophetic utterances.
- 21 But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good;
- 22 abstain from every form of evil.
- ¶ 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.
- ¶ 25 Brethren, pray for us.
- ¶ 26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.
- 27 I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.
- ¶ 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.