



*The Thessalonian believers were considered the “role-model Christians” who loved the Lord, gave generously to those in need, and testified of God’s faith. Yet, they had much room to grow and learn. Just because they were fervent in the Lord did not mean that they were immune from daily persecution and temptations of sexual immorality, disorderliness, and apathy. They were also fuzzy on basic doctrines such as the second coming of Christ. We may find many of our J2 students to be like the Thessalonian believers. Although they love the Lord and come to church, they are only coming of age in the spiritual sense. They have the heart to do good and work for the Lord, but face the challenges of peer pressure and tempting situations. Let us learn from Paul and guide them in a gentle and loving matter; let us pray that they will be able to grow in the Lord, overcome youthful temptations, preach the word, and aim for eternity in their daily lives.*

## 2 Thessalonians

### Listed Scriptures

Acts 17, 2 Thessalonians

### Lesson Aim

- 1) To learn how to encourage someone undergoing persecution.
- 2) To help students recognize signs of the end times.
- 3) To encourage students to prepare for Christ’s second coming by pursuing a godly and productive lifestyle.

### Memory Verse

“We constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith...” (2 Thess 1:11)

### Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

2 Thes 1-3

## BIBLE BACKGROUND

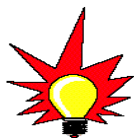


Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians was written in Corinth, approximately half a year after the first letter (circa 50-51 AD). The first letter had greatly encouraged the members in Thessalonica. However, false teachers soon began distorting Paul’s message regarding eschatology (the theology of the end times). Some even counterfeited Paul and taught in his name (2 Thess 2:1-2)! As a result, many believers stopped working because they believed the world was about to end. They became idlers who whittled away their time and lived off the labor of others. This created a chaotic situation for the church. Thus, Paul wrote this second letter with three purposes in mind:

1. to encourage believers undergoing persecution,
2. to correct false teachings regarding the second coming,
3. to urge believers to return to work and live a godly, productive lifestyle.

Note: For a more thorough understanding of the background of 2 Thessalonians, please review the Bible Background section in Lesson 8.

## W A R M U P



In the news, we sometimes hear of religious leaders who predict that the world will end on such-and-such a date. Some followers even sell their property, congregate at a certain place and time and wait for the Lord's coming. Unfortunately, Christ never appears at the proclaimed time and the movement ends in tragedy or disappointment. Is it wrong to believe in the urgency of the end times? How should we live in preparation for Christ's coming?

## B I B L E S T U D Y



### Part 1

## Outline of 2 Thessalonians

- a. Encouragement
  - i. Commending spiritual growth
  - ii. Reminding about the end goal
    - 1. Suffering for the kingdom of God
    - 2. Punishment for those who oppose the truth
  - iii. Praying for the Lord's work
- b. Eschatology
  - i. Resisting temptation
  - ii. Recognizing the man of sin/lawlessness
  - iii. Standing firm in hope
- c. Living a godly, productive life
  - i. In prayer
  - ii. In deed
  - iii. In love



### Part 2

## Teachings of 2 Thessalonians



### A. Encouragement (Ch 1)

- a. Commending spiritual growth (1:3-4)

Paul begins the letter by encouraging the Thessalonian believers who were undergoing intense persecution. He commends them for their perseverance and their spiritual growth in the following areas:

  - i. Faith

The believers did not cower in persecution. Instead, their faith grew more and more in the face of trials and persecution.
  - ii. Love

Although they themselves were suffering, the believers proactively cared for, comforted, and supported others (Heb 10:32-34). This demonstrates the fullness of their love.
  - iii. Ability to comfort others

Paul was comforted by the faith of the Thessalonians. He boasted about them and was able to thank God for them. In the same way, we can comfort and assure our parents and elders when we stand firm in the face of persecution and hold on to biblical principles.
- b. Reminding about the end goal (1:5-10)

Sometimes the best way to stay focused is to keep the end in mind. Philippians 3:14 talks about pressing "toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Likewise, Paul helps the Thessalonians refocus on the end goal, which is to:

  - i. Enter the kingdom of God (1:5)

The Lord is pleased with those who suffer for His name's sake (Mt 5:10). Because the believers have suffered for the kingdom of God, they have the assurance of receiving the Lord's reward (v. 10).
  - ii. Stand before the Lord on the last day (1:8-10)

God is just. Although the wicked may seem to prevail at the moment, God will ultimately punish those who oppose the truth and cause suffering (v. 6-7). He will reward those who suffer for His name's sake, so those who belong to Him will witness the glory of the Lord.


c. Praying for the Lord's work (1:11-12)

An athlete is motivated to do his best during a sports game when there are fans and supporters cheering on the sidelines. The same concept applies to the spiritual battlefield. It is much easier to fight the good fight when we have someone supporting us through prayer. Here, Paul prays:

- i. that God will count the Thessalonians worthy of the calling,
- ii. that God will help believers fulfill His good work,
- iii. that God will give believers power in their holy work.

The purpose behind all of these is to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ.

---



## **B. Eschatology teachings on the end times (Ch 2)**

In the second section of his letter, Paul clarifies teachings regarding the end times. He not only corrects false teachings regarding the second coming, but teaches the believers how to prepare and react towards the second coming of Christ.

a. Resisting temptation (2:1-3)

In order to resist temptation, we need to:

- i. Understand signs of the end times (v. 2)  
There will be rumors and spiritual events leading up to the second coming. To stand firm, believers must be able to discern true from false.
- ii. Patiently wait upon the Lord (v. 3)  
The Lord Jesus clearly told us that we will be able to observe signs to know that the end is near (Mt 24:34). He also said that "but of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Mt 24:36). As Christians, all we can do is diligently and patiently wait for the Lord's second coming. We should not make judgments regarding the hour of the Lord's Day, nor believe in the speculations of others.

b. Recognizing the man of sin/lawlessness (2:3-12)

The Day of the Lord will not come before the man of sin (man of lawlessness in NIV) is revealed. Therefore, it is important for us to be able to recognize the man of sin.

- i. Characteristics (v. 4)  
The man of sin opposes God and tries to exalt himself above all that is worshiped. He sits at the temple, claims to be God, and has the power to perform signs and wonders. However, under the light of truth, the man of sin will be exposed as a proud, cheap imitation of God.
- ii. Limitations (v. 9)  
Although the man of sin will have satanic powers to perform miracles, his time and power is limited by the Lord (v. 7). The lawless one may deceive

others, but the Holy Spirit will instruct and keep us away from deception as long as we fear God and stand firm in our faith.

iii. Ending (v. 8)

The lawless one will be consumed by the breath of the Lord and destroyed by the brightness of His coming. The man of sin will ultimately fail and be eternally condemned.

c. Standing firm in hope (2:13-17)

i. Keeping the faith (v. 15)

Believers should not be alarmed by false teachings regarding the end times. We should hope for, but not obsessively anticipate, the second coming of the Lord. We should hold fast to the traditions that were taught to us, whether by word (sermons) or the epistle (the Bible). The truth will help us discern right and wrong, overcome selfish desires, and escape from heresies and trends of the world.

ii. Pursuing holiness (v. 13)

One way to stand firm in hope is to constantly and actively pursue sanctification and spiritual improvement through the Holy Spirit.

---



## **C. Living a Godly, Productive Life (Ch 3)**

Chapter 3 is the life application section of 2 Thessalonians. Here, Paul urges the believers to turn away from idleness and aim for improvements in the following areas:

a. In prayer (3:1-5)

i. Praying for the ministers (v. 1-3)

The Thessalonians are asked to pray for Paul, Silas, and Timothy so they may spread the gospel swiftly, be delivered from opposition, and glorify the Lord. Today, we must also remember to pray for the workers of God so they do not lose heart in their preaching.

ii. Praying for ourselves (v. 5)

We should pray that the Lord will direct our hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

b. In deed (3:6-12)

i. Orderly conduct (v. 6-11)

Paul urges the believers to live orderly lifestyles. In our daily living and interactions with others, we should use the truth of the Bible as our guiding principle. We should keep a distance from defiant and disorderly brethren, respect the church, and live to glorify God and edify men.

## ii. Quiet labor (v. 12)

Although we hope for the second coming of Christ, we should not sit around all day doing nothing. Instead, believers need to avoid idleness and be a productive part of society. We need to work and earn an honest living so that we may have income to support our selves, our family, and holy work. This way, we will not be a burden to others and will be able to contribute to the work of the Lord.

## c. In love (3:13-15)

## i. Not growing weary in doing good (v. 13)

We should try our best to help those in need. When we are rich in good works (2 Tim 6:18), we demonstrate the spirit of unity in Christ's family (1 John 3:17-18).

## ii. Keeping one another in check (v. 14-15)

With love, believers need to comfort the brokenhearted, encourage the weak, warn the disobedient, and heed each other's warnings. This way, the body of Christ may grow in love toward perfection.

## C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

What are the three main reasons why Paul wrote the second letter to the Thessalonians?

2

How does Paul encourage believers who are suffering for their belief?

3

According to chapter 2, what attitude should Christians have toward the Lord's second coming? What can they do to prepare for the end times?

4

Who will appear before the second coming of Christ? What are his characteristics, limitations, and ending?

5

Why is it important to stay away from idleness? What should we do instead?

**Where Does My Time Go?**

In 2 Thessalonians, Paul urges the believers to stay away from idleness and live a godly and productive life. While it's less likely that we will sit around and wait for the Lord's coming, it is very possible that we do not use our time as wisely as we should. This first exercise will help us see where the majority of our time is spent.

Materials required:

Five or six colored markers/pencils per student

Instructions:

- Each box is ONE HOUR. Use a pencil/pen to color in all non-discretionary time in the table below. This is time you have no control over. Non-discretionary time includes:
  - Life-sustaining functions (eating, sleeping, bathroom time)
  - Socially required hygienic duties (grooming)
  - Occupation (school, work, includes transportation)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_ (part-time job if financial necessity)
- The remaining white space should be your discretionary time. Count the white boxes.
 

Your discretionary time PER WEEK is \_\_\_\_\_ HOURS.

Divide your discretionary time by 7 days a week.

Your discretionary time PER DAY is \_\_\_\_\_ HOURS.
- Use colored pencils to mark each of the following categories. You may include categories that take up significant amounts of time per day.
  - Group worship (church time, fellowships)
  - Individual worship (individual prayer and Bible reading)
  - Relationship building (time spent with family and friends, phone, email)
  - Self improvement (studying, practicing instruments)
  - Leisure activities (sports, hobbies, travel, reading, movies, music, browsing Internet)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

A TYPICAL WEEK IN THE LIFE OF \_\_\_\_\_

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
6:00 AM							
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
10:00 AM							
11:00 AM							
12:00 PM							
1:00 PM							
2:00 PM							
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM							
9:00 PM							
10:00 PM							
11:00 PM							
12:00 AM							
1:00 AM							
2:00 AM							
3:00 AM							
4:00 AM							
5:00 AM							

your life? Are you currently living more of a godly, productive life or an idle one? Please circle where you think you are:

embracing idleness —1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10— godly, productive  
wasting life away using time wisely

7. Write down three areas you would like to change about your time usage and how you can improve your life:

REFLECTION & PRAYER



*As we wait upon the Lord's coming, many heresies and false teachings will appear to deceive the world and cause believers to abandon the truth. Therefore, we must exercise discernment and allow the Holy Spirit and truth to guide our daily lives. Just as Proverbs 16:25 tells us, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Let us pray that the Lord will give us His strength and wisdom so that we can avoid the way of death and stay on the path of life. Let us prepare ourselves for the Lord's second coming by living as faithful and useful servants of Christ.*

4. Count the number of boxes for each color.  
 The average time you spend on group worship per week is \_\_\_\_\_ hours  
 The time you spend on individual worship per week is \_\_\_\_\_ hours  
 The time you spend on relationship building per week is \_\_\_\_\_ hours  
 The time you spend on self improvement per week is \_\_\_\_\_ hours  
 The time you spend on leisure activities per week is \_\_\_\_\_ hours  
 The time you spend on \_\_\_\_\_ per week is \_\_\_\_\_ hours
5. Calculate the percentage of your discretionary time spent on each category by dividing the number of hours by the total discretionary time. Rank the percentages in order. (Optional: create a pie chart with the percentages.)
6. Think & reflect: Is there anything that is surprising about how you use your time? According to your time chart, are there surplus amounts of idleness in