1 Thessalonians

**Introduction**

Paul wrote this letter to encourage new believers in their faith, to exhort them to godly living, to give them assurance about the eternal state of believers who had died, and to defend the integrity of his ministry as an apostle. Thessalonica (present-day Thessaloniki, Greece) was the capital of Roman Macedonia. It was an important trade routes. Paul, twice identified as the author (1:1; 2:18), visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey but was forced to flee because of Jewish opposition. He sent Timothy to work with the largely Gentile church there, and Timothy brought him good news of their faith (3:6). This is one of Paul’s first letters, probably written about a.d. 50–51.

Acts 16-17, Paul has a vision and was told to go to Macedonia. He went to Philippi and had problems. Put in jail, earthquake, and all prisoners are unlocked. Guard starts to kill himself and Paul stops him. Church begins to grow and then Paul moves on to Thessalonica.

*“This letter is full of interest because it is certainly among the first of those which have been preserved for us from the pen of Paul. It was the first he wrote to European Christians, and in it the fundamental things of the Christian life are very clearly set forth.”* (G. Campbell Morgan)

**Greeting**

**1 *Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,***

***To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:***

***Grace to you and peace.***

**1 Paul,** Paul visited Thessalonica during his second missionary journey (ca. ad 49–51; Acts 17:1–9). Preaching in the local synagogue, Paul converted many Thessalonians—both Jew and Gentile—to Christianity (Acts 17:2–4). Some Jews, however, became jealous and caused a disturbance in the city (Acts 17:5). They accused Paul of claiming there was another king, named Jesus (Acts 17:7)—an act of treason against the Roman emperor. Before they could arrest him, Paul was sent away, leaving behind a community of new believers.

**Acts 17:***Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.* ***2****And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,* ***3****explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”* ***4****And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.* ***5****But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd.* ***6****And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,* ***7****and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.”* ***8****And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things.* ***9****And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.*

**Paul and Silas in Berea**

***10****The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. [[1]](#footnote-1)*

Concerned they might not withstand the threat of persecution, Paul sent Timothy to encourage the Thessalonians (1 Thess 3:2). Timothy reported back that they endured the persecution but now had concerns about the Lord’s return. In addition, some believers continued to engage in sexual immorality, while others refused to work for a living. Paul wrote this letter in response to Timothy’s report. He likely wrote the letter from Corinth between ad 50–51 (compare Acts 18:1), making it one of the earliest books of the nt.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Silvanus,** (Silas) is mentioned in 2 Cor. 1:19 where he is said to have shared in the evangelistic activity of Paul and Timothy at Corinth. Though unclear whether he is the Silvanus of 1 Peter 5:12, Silvanus, also called Silas, this man was with his two colleagues in the evangelization of Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–9) and Corinth (Acts 18:5). He, along with Judas Barsabbas, was a member of the Jerusalem church charged with conveying the letter containing the apostolic decree (Acts 15:22, 27, 32). He accompanied Paul on his missionary journey through Asia Minor to Macedonia, where he was involved with evangelizing the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. It seems that Silvanus was, like Paul, a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37).[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Silvanus** (also known as *Silas*) was a long and experienced companion of Paul. He traveled with Paul on his second missionary journey and was imprisoned and set free with Paul in the Philippian jail ([Acts 16:19-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.19-30&t=NKJV)). When Paul first came to Thessalonica, Silas came with him ([Acts 17:1-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+17.1-9&t=NKJV)). Therefore, the Thessalonians knew **Silvanus** well.

**Timothy,** was a trusted colleague of Paul’s who was instrumental in the churches in Thessalonica (3:2, 6), Corinth (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10), and Philippi (Phil. 2:19). He was a native of a South Galatian city, perhaps Lystra. His mother was a Jew and his father a Greek. He was converted during Paul and Barnabas’ first trip to that region, was circumcised, and taken along with Paul as a junior colleague. Timothy accompanied Paul and Silas to Macedonia (Acts 16:1–10; 17:14, 15) and later rejoined Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5; Bruce, 6). See comment on Phil. 1:1.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Timothy** was a resident of Lystra, a city in the province of Galatia ([Acts 16:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.1-3&t=NKJV)). He was the son of a Greek father ([Acts 16:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.1&t=NKJV)) and a Jewish mother named Eunice ([2 Timothy 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+1.5&t=NKJV)). From his youth he learned the Scriptures from his mother and grandmother ([2 Timothy 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+1.5&t=NKJV); [3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.15&t=NKJV)). Timothy was a trusted companion and associate of Paul, and he accompanied Paul on many of his missionary journeys. Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonians on a previous occasion ([1 Thessalonians 3:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+3.2&t=NKJV)).

**Timothy** is named here probably because he played an important role in the preaching in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 16:1–18:28; O’Brien, 44). Paul warmly cites Timothy as an example of Christlikeness (2:19–24) and seems to have placed him in charge of the church at Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:21). He was a native of Lystra in Asia Minor (Acts 16:1–2), whose mother (Eunice, 2 Tim. 1:5) was Jewish and father was Greek (Acts 16:1). Timothy was chosen by Paul to accompany him on his second missionary journey apparently because of his good reputation in that area (Acts 16:2–3). He was certainly involved with Paul’s conflict in Philippi (see Introduction). Eusebius later describes him as that church’s first bishop (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.4). Heb. 13:23 suggests that Timothy was imprisoned, while a tradition from the fourth century claims he was martyred under Domitian in a.d. 97 (*Acts of Timothy*; Bockmuehl, 49). He is probably not to be thought of as a co-author, as the extensive use of “I” throughout suggests a single author. Instead, Timothy perhaps served as a secretary, or *amanuenses*, writing letters for the chained apostle as he dictated them (see Introduction to the Prison Epistles). **Bond-servants** (*douloi*) is plural and attributed both to Paul and Timothy. In the LXX a **bond-servant** (*doulos*) often designated someone whom God used for a special ministry or through whom he spoke, such as Moses (Neh. 10:29), Joshua (Josh. 24:29), David (Ps. 89:20), and Jonah (2 Kings 14:25; O’Brien, 45; cf. Exod. 14:3; Num. 12:7; Jer. 25:4; Ezek. 38:17; Amos 3:7; Zech. 1:6). The faithful in the Old Testament were commonly called **saints** (Greek, *hagioi* literally, “holy ones”). This identification was likewise adopted as the self-designating term for the Qumran sectarians (1QS 5:13, 18; 8:17, 20, 23; 9:8; 1QM 6:6; 10:10; 16:1; cf. also *1 Enoch* 1.9; 39.1; *Jub.* 31.14). Philippi, as a Roman colony, would have had many slaves and been familiar with the humble imagery it invokes (cf. Introduction to Philemon).[[5]](#footnote-5)

**To the church of the Thessalonians** Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey ([Acts 17:1-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+17.1-9&t=NKJV)). He was only in the city a short time because he was forced out by enemies of the Gospel. Yet **the church of the Thessalonians** continued alive and active. Though Paul had to suddenly leave this young church, his deep concern for them prompted this letter.

i. On Paul’s second missionary journey, he was imprisoned in Philippi and then miraculously freed from jail – only to be kicked out of the city. Then he came to Thessalonica, the prosperous capital of the province of Macedonia (northern Greece), located on the famous Egnatian Way.

ii. After only three weekends of prosperous ministry ([Acts 17:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+17.2&t=NKJV)), he had to flee from an angry mob. He moved on to Berea – again enjoying several weeks of ministry, but soon driven out by the same Thessalonian mob.

iii. His next stop was Athens where he preached a good sermon but had mixed results. By the time he came to Corinth, he was *in weakness, in fear and in much trembling* ([1 Corinthians 2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.3&t=NKJV)). At this point of the second missionary journey, it seemed that Paul was a very discouraged missionary.

iv. While in Corinth, it is likely that Paul was greatly concerned about the churches he had just founded, and he wondered about their state. While at Corinth, Silas and Timothy came to him from Thessalonica with great news: the church there was strong. Paul became so excited that he dashed off this letter to the Thessalonians, probably his first letter to any church. He wrote it just a few months after he had first established the church in Thessalonica. After writing and sending this letter, Paul enjoyed a sustained and fruitful ministry in Corinth – and eventually returned to the Thessalonians.

v. This letter presupposes a basic truth: Paul thought it important, (even essential) to organize these young converts into a community of mutual interest, care, and fellowship. Paul “knew better than to leave his young societies with nothing more than the vague memory of pious preaching. The local organization was, as yet, primitive, but evidently it was sufficient to maintain itself and carry on the business of the church, when the guiding hand of the missionary was removed.” (Moffatt)

**To the church of the Thessalonians** This is an unusual form, since typically the apostle writes “to the saints at” a particular city. The city **of the Thessalonians**, Thessalonica, was founded ca. 315 b.c. by Cassander, a former general of Alexander the Great. It was located at the head of the Thermaic Gulf (now the Gulf of Salonika), which contributed to its important role as a military and commercial port. It was made capital of one of the four administrative districts into which Macedonia was divided in 168 b.c. and became capital of the entire province when Macedonia was unified in 146 b.c. Thessalonica became a free city in 42 b.c., in return for its support of Antony and Octavian, for which it was given a degree of local autonomy, including the right to mint coins. It was also given freedom from military occupation and granted certain tax concessions. This favor also meant it would not be made a Roman colony, thus not subject to the Roman *ius Italicum* (see comment on Phil. 1:1) and would not be required to house demobilized Roman soldiers as Philippi had done. Though Thessalonica, as other Macedonian cities, suffered greatly from the Roman civil wars of 44 to 31 b.c., it subsequently enjoyed a period of unparalleled peace and generally improving economic circumstances as commercial activity underwent considerable development (Wannamaker, 4). Thessalonica remained the most important and populous city in Macedonia into the third, and perhaps fourth centuries a.d. A Greek inscription from the Vardar Gate, which stood over the nearby Egnatian Way on which Paul traveled from Philippi to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1), was discovered which uses the Greek word *politarch?s* (“civic official”), a term otherwise found only in Paul’s account of his visit to that city (Acts 17:6).[[6]](#footnote-6)

**in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:**

**Grace to you and peace.**

**Peace** (*eirēnē*) is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *shalom,* a very common OT expression found most prominently in the “Aaronic blessing” (Num. 6:22–27; cf. 10:19). It was associated with divine restoration (Jer. 29:11; 33:6) and was a characteristic of the Messianic age (Isa. 66:12; Ezek. 34:25; 37:26; Mic. 5:4–5; Hag. 2:9). Usually one found “mercy” (*eleos*) alongside **peace** (*eirēnē*) in Jewish letters, but not **grace** (Dan. 3:98 [4:1]; *2 Bar.* 78.2).[[7]](#footnote-7)

Paul brought this customary greeting to the Thessalonian Christians, hailing them in the **grace** and **peace** of God the Father.

i. Morris on **grace to you**: “The change in the Greek form though slight in sound [*chairein* to *charis*], is great in sense. It is a big step from ‘greeting’ to ‘grace.’ Grace fundamentally means ‘that which causes joy,’ a shade of meaning we may still discern when we speak of a graceful action or the social graces. It comes to mean ‘favor,’ ‘kindness,’ and then especially God’s kindness to man in providing for his spiritual needs in Christ.”

ii. Hiebert on **God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**: “Paul’s construction, which unites the two under the government of the one preposition in (*en*), places the two names side by side on a basis of equality. It is a clear witness to his conviction concerning the deity of Jesus Christ.”

iii. “It is important to notice that the first words of 1 Thessalonians are in the form usual at the beginning of a letter of this period. What follows is not a theological treatise, but a real letter arising out of the situation in which the Apostle and his friends find themselves.” (Morris)

**The Thessalonians’ Faith and Example**

***2We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, 3remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. 6And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, 7so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. 9For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.***

**2We give thanks to God always for all of you,** When Paul thought of the Christians in Thessalonica, his heart filled with gratitude. Paul started the church there in less than ideal circumstances, being run out of town after only three weekends with them ([Acts 17:1-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+17.1-10&t=NKJV)). Yet the church was strong and full of life. Paul knew that this work was beyond him and his abilities and that it was the work of God.

**constantly mentioning you in our prayers, 3remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.** There were things about the Christians in Thessalonica that Paul simply could not forget. He always remembered them. What he remembered about them, made him thankful.

i. Paul’s gratitude didn’t come because all the Christians in Thessalonica thought so highly of him. Later, Paul used a whole chapter defending himself and his ministry against slander and false accusations.

ii. Paul’s gratitude didn’t come because the Thessalonian Christians were morally impeccable. Later in the letter, Paul strongly warned them against the failings in regard to sexual impurity.

iii. Paul’s gratitude didn’t come because the Thessalonian Christians were completely accurate in all their doctrine. He had to correct some of their wrong ideas in that area also.

Despite the problems, Paul was so grateful to God for the Thessalonians because there was an undeniable work of the Holy Spirit and a marvelous change in their lives. The three great Christian virtues were evident among them: **faith**, **love**, and **hope**. Vs 3

i. “Here for the first time, chronologically, in Paul’s writings we have this famous triad: *faith, love, hope*. But Paul’s stress is not on these virtues alone, but rather upon what they produce.” (Hiebert)

· Therefore, their **faith** produced **work** – as is the nature of true faith.

· Their **love** produced **labor**. There are two different ancient Greek words for work: *ergon* and *kopos*. *Ergon* “may be pleasant and stimulating,” but *kopos* “implies toil that is strenuous and sweat-producing.” (Hiebert)

· Their **hope** produced **patience**, which is the long-suffering *endurance* needed to not only survive hard times, but to triumph through them.

**4For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,** Paul reminded them that God *loved* them (**beloved**) and that He *chose* them (**election**). The two go together. When we *love* someone, we naturally *choose* them.

The following verses will explain *why* Paul was so confident in **knowing** their **election by God**. Paul saw definite signs that said, “These Thessalonians are God’s elect.” In a sermon on the following passage, Charles Spurgeon found four evidences of election:

· The Word of God coming home with power (*our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power*).

· The reception of God’s Word with much assurance (*and in much assurance*).

· The desire to be like Jesus (*you became followers of us and of the Lord*).

· The existence of spiritual joy in spiritual service (*in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit*).

God has foreknowledge of who will accept him.

**5because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power**

The **gospel** is not a matter of mere words. In modern culture there is an overflow of information or entertainment that often only amounts to mere words. Yet the Gospel is more than words, it also has **power**.

The message of Jesus Christ has **power**. It has **power** for miracles; **power** for wonderful signs from God; and best of all, it has the **power** to change minds, hearts, and lives.

“Some take the word *power* to mean miracles. I extend the word to apply to the spiritual power of doctrine… It is the living voice of God, inseparable from its effect, as compared with the empty and lifeless eloquence of men.” (Calvin)

**and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.** It is a message by the **Holy Spirit**, a living Person, who works within the hearts of the hearers, to convict, to comfort, and to instruct. If the preacher only speaks, then it is a matter of **word only**, but when the **Holy Spirit** works through the Word, a great spiritual work is accomplished.

We sometimes think too little about the *spiritual* operations of the Word of God. There is a spiritual work of God’s Word that goes far beyond the basic educational value of learning the Bible.

This describes the preacher who really believes what he preaches. There is no substitute for that **conviction**, and if a preacher doesn’t have it, he should stay out of the pulpit.

**You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. 6And you became imitators of us and of the Lord,** The Thessalonians stopped following other things but followed after Paul and the Lord. Paul says that it was a good thing for them to follow him, and he wasn’t shy about saying “follow me” because he knew where he was going.

This shows that Paul’s message included an element of *personal discipleship*. There was a sense in which Paul personally led these Thessalonian Christians in their spiritual life. They could see his life and were invited to learn from his example.

Paul repeated this theme several times: *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.* ([Philippians 3:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.17&t=NKJV)) *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.* ([1 Corinthians 11:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+11.1&t=NKJV))

**for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,** The Thessalonian Christians distinguished themselves because they **received** the Word, even **in much affliction**. The message they heard came with adversity; yet they received it, and Paul thanked God because of it.

When the Thessalonian Christians faced the **affliction** from receiving the Word, they didn’t just face it with a resigned fatalism. They faced it **with joy of the Holy Spirit**.

Not long before coming to Thessalonica, Paul and Silas personally experienced the principle of having the joy of the Holy Spirit even in the presence of much affliction – when they sang in the Philippian jail despite their chains and sufferings. They were examples of this same spirit to the Thessalonian Christians.

**7so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.** First, Paul was an example to the Thessalonian Christians. Then *they***became examples** to others. This is exactly how the work of God should happen.

The Christians in **Macedonia and Achaia** needed examples, and the Thessalonians supplied that need. This was true even though they had only been followers of Jesus a short time. As Christians, we always need others who will *show* us how to follow Jesus Christ, beyond the need of *hearing* about how to follow Him.

**8For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia,** This was part of the good example that the Thessalonian Christians provided. “**Sounded forth**” means “a loud ringing sound, as of a trumpet blast.” The good work the Lord did among the Thessalonians became known all over the region, and everyone talked about the changes.

In a cosmopolitan trading city like Thessalonica, the good news could sound forth **in every place** to all the earth.

**but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.** Paul said, “You Thessalonian Christians are sounding forth the Word of the Lord so effectively that you are putting me out of business!

Paul pairs two ideas. The word of the Lord **sounded forth**, and their **faith toward God has gone out**. Those two aspects are essential if a church will spread the Gospel. First, they need a message to spread, and that message first needs to impact *their own* lives. Second, they need the **faith** to go out, so that their **faith toward God** goes out to all the world.

**9For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,** When the Thessalonians received the Word of God from Paul, they responded to it by leaving their **idols**, and they gave themselves to **serve the living and true God**. Their reception of the Word and their faith in God was shown as true because they *did* something with the Word of God.

**10and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.** Paul pointed to the essence of salvation in saying Jesus **delivers us from the wrath to come**. We are saved **from** something, and that something is the righteous **wrath** of a holy God.

**Paul’s Ministry to the Thessalonians. 2:1–12** Paul reminds the Thessalonians how he and his fellow workers conducted themselves while in Thessalonica. Paul’s goal is to reassure the church of his commitment to them despite his unexpected and prolonged absence from Thessalonica (2:17–3:13). He first contrasts himself with contemporary philosophers to show that they were not motivated by greed or self-indulgence (vv. 2–6). He then reminds the Thessalonians that he and his fellow missionaries ministered to them with gentleness and love (vv. 7–12). He concludes this section with another thanksgiving prayer.[[8]](#footnote-8)

**2 For you yourselves know,** This begins a section where Paul defended his own character and ministry before the Thessalonians. This wasn’t because Paul was insecure about his ministry, but because he had many enemies in Thessalonica ([Acts 17:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+17.5-6&t=NKJV) and [17:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+17.13&t=NKJV)) who discredited him in his absence, especially because of his hurried departure from Thessalonica. Paul’s enemies said he left town quickly because he was a self-serving coward. 3 weeks. Enemies would say, If Paul really loved you, he would have stayed here, but they drove him out of town.

**brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain.** The word vain here can refer either to the *result* of the ministry, or the *character* of the ministry. Because it was evident to everyone that Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica was a success, it is better to see it as a reference to the *character* of Paul’s ministry. His coming was not empty or hollow, as if he were a mere salesman or marketer.

**2But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi,** Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned in Philippi for advocating customs unlawful for Roman citizens (Acts 16:21). See Acts 16:19–39[[9]](#footnote-9) If Paul was discredited, then the Gospel is discredited.

Barclay saw the following false charges against Paul, evident from the way Paul explained himself in this chapter:

· “Paul has a police record and is therefore untrustworthy” ([1 Thessalonians 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.2&t=NKJV), *suffered before* referring to his imprisonment in Thessalonica).

· “Paul is delusional” ([1 Thessalonians 2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.3&t=NKJV), *error*).

· “Paul’s ministry is based on impure motives” ([1 Thessalonians 2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.3&t=NKJV), *uncleanness*).

· “Paul deliberately deceives others” ([1 Thessalonians 2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.3&t=NKJV), *in deceit*).

· “Paul preaches to please others, not God” ([1 Thessalonians 2:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.4&t=NKJV), *not as pleasing men*).

· “Paul is in the ministry as a mercenary, to get what he can out of it materially” ([1 Thessalonians 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.5&t=NKJV), [2:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.9&t=NKJV), *nor a cloak for covetousness*).

· “Paul only wants personal glory” ([1 Thessalonians 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.6&t=NKJV), *nor did we seek glory from men*).

· “Paul is something of a dictator” ([1 Thessalonians 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.7&t=NKJV) *we were gentle among you*).

**as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.** Despite what some of Paul’s accusers said, he did not only preach the Gospel when it was easy or convenient. He knew what it was like to speak boldly for the Lord even in much conflict.

**3For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive,** Paul reassures the Thessalonians about the integrity of his teaching, motives, and methods.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The purity of Paul’s message made it apparent that there was no deceit, uncleanness, or guile in his ministry. In the first century world Paul lived in, there were many competing religions, and many ministers of those religions were motivated by greed and gain.

The city of Thessalonica sat on the Egnatian Way, the famous highway that went east to west through Macedonia. Thessalonica was also an important port and a melting pot city with cultures from all over the world. There were a staggering variety of religions and religious professionals in Thessalonica. In this city, you would find the worship of the gods of the Olympian pantheon, especially Apollo, Athena, and Hercules. There were the native Greek mystery religions, celebrating Dionysis and the sex and drinking cult. The Greek intellectual and philosophical traditions were also represented. There were shrines to many Egyptian gods: Isis, Sarapis, Anubis. Also present were the Roman State cults that deified the political heroes of Rome. There were also the Jewish people and the God-fearing Gentiles.

Most of these religions were missionary minded and sought to spread their faith using itinerant evangelists and preachers. Most of these missionaries were opportunists, who took everything they could from their listeners, and then moved on to find someone else to support them.

**4but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel,** Jesus Christ commissioned Paul as an apostle (Acts 9:4–6), and the churches in Antioch and Jerusalem recognized his status and calling (Acts 13:1; Gal 2:9). Consequently, Paul presents himself and his teaching as worthy of the Thessalonians’ trust.[[11]](#footnote-11)

**so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.** Paul knew his Gospel wouldn’t always please men, but he knew that it was pleasing to God. Paul tried to make the Gospel as attractive as possible, but he never changed its central character or focus. Paul never compromised issues like man’s need, God’s Savior, the cross, the resurrection, and the new life.

**5For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed** The Greek word used here, *pleonexia*, refers to the desire to possess more than others, regardless of actual need. Paul and his companions were not greedy, nor did not they use any pretext to disguise greediness—a common practice among traveling philosophers.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Paul understood that covetousness always has a cloak. It is always concealed by a noble sounding goal. But Paul did not use the flattering words that often are a cloak for covetousness.

**—God is witness.** Paul calls God as his witness because only God can fully know the motives behind his missionary efforts. Compare 1 Thess 2:10; Rom 1:9; 2 Cor 1:23[[13]](#footnote-13)

**6Nor did we seek glory from people,** When Paul ministered among the Thessalonians, he was unconcerned for his personal glory. He didn’t need fancy introductions or lavish praise. His satisfaction came from his relationship with Jesus, not from the praise of people. Paul didn’t seek glory from men because his needs for security and acceptance were met primarily in Jesus. This meant that he didn’t spend his life trying to seek and earn the acceptance of man. He ministered from an understanding of his identity in Jesus. **whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.** Paul was among the Thessalonians to *give* something to them, not to *take* something from them. He did not come making demands as an apostle.

**7But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.** Paul is likely using the image of a nursing mother or a wet nurse here. In the Graeco-Roman world, wet nurses were commonly used for feeding infants. Such nurses were highly esteemed for their work and were used by both the upper and lower classes of society. Paul presents this metaphor to characterize the love and care that he and his coworkers showed to the Thessalonians.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Paul was like a nursing mother, who only looks to *give* to her child. Though some among the Thessalonians had accused Paul of ministering out of self interest, but Paul simply asks the Christians in Thessalonica to remember the gentle character of his ministry among them.

**8So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.** The sacrifices Paul endured for the sake of ministry to the Thessalonians were not a burden. He was well pleased to do it because Paul was affectionately longing for the Thessalonians because they had become dear to Paul and his associates. Paul’s preaching was effective because he gave not only the Gospel, but himself as well (also our own lives), and he gave because of love (you had become dear to us). It has been said that people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. Paul gave both his *care* and his *knowledge* to the Thessalonians.

**9For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil:** Paul recognized his right to be supported by those he ministered to ([1 Corinthians 9:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.14&t=NKJV)), but voluntarily gave up that right to set himself apart from missionaries of false religions. Paul denied his rights and took a higher standard upon himself. **we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.** Greeks considered manual labor the duty of slaves. But Paul and his companions worked in order to set an example for the Thessalonians and relieve them of having to provide financial support (compare 1 Thess 5:13). Paul’s goal was to support himself through his long hours of labor so that he would not become a burden to his churches (compare 1 Cor 9:3–14).[[15]](#footnote-15)

**10You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. 11For you know how, like a father** Paul considered himself to be a spiritual father to those he led to Christ (e.g., 1 Cor 4:15; Phlm 10). Drawing on this image, Paul describes how he played the role of a father by helping his children mature in the faith after their conversion.[[16]](#footnote-16) It is impressive that Paul could freely appeal to his own life as an example. Paul didn’t have to say, “Please don’t look at my life. Look to Jesus.” Paul wanted people to look to Jesus, but he could also tell them to look at *his* life, because the power of Jesus was real in his life. As seen in [1 Thessalonians 1:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+1.6&t=NKJV), Paul was comfortable in the idea of other Christians following his example. He repeated the same idea in passages like [Philippians 3:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.17&t=NKJV) and [1 Corinthians 11:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+11.1&t=NKJV).

**with his children, 12we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.** The Greek word used here, *basilea*, refers in this context to the domain God rules as King. Believers must live in accordance with His commands as subjects within His kingdom.

When Paul proclaimed the arrival of another king in Thessalonica, the people took offense because of their allegiance to the Roman emperor (Acts 17:7). To abandon their allegiance to Caesar meant abandoning their social, religious, and civic obligations. For this reason, the believers in Thessalonica experienced persecution and affliction by their own people (1 Thess 2:14).[[17]](#footnote-17)

 Paul himself lived justly and blamelessly, but he also told the Thessalonians they should live the same way. He could tell them that they should walk worthy of God because his life and message were consistent.

**13And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.** Paul earnestly believed and taught others that God had spoken to man and that we have recorded this word of God. Paul believed in a voice that speaks to mankind with the authority of eternity, and speaks above mere human opinion. Since we do have this word of God, we have a true voice of authority.

Some people like to say that there is a word of God, but that we can’t be sure of what He says. When we appeal to the Bible, they like to reply, “That’s just your interpretation.” There are certainly some places where the word of God is hard to precisely interpret, but there are not many such places. If we can not know what God has spoken, then He may as well not have spoken at all.

The Thessalonians received the word of God as it is in truth. Paul presented it not as theword of men, and the Thessalonians received it as the word of God.

Not everyone receives this message as the word of God. Yet when they do not receive it, it reflects upon *them*, not upon the message. “That you have not perceived spiritual things is true; but it is no proof that there are none to perceive. The whole case is like that of the Irishman who tried to upset evidence by non-evidence. Four witnesses saw him commit a murder. He pleaded that he was not guilty, and wished to establish his innocence by producing forty persons who did not see him do it. Of what use would that have been? So, if forty people declare that there is no power of the Holy Ghost going with the word, this only proves that the forty people do not know what others do know.” (Spurgeon)

Paul’s confidence in the word of God wasn’t a matter of wishful thinking or blind faith. He could see that it effectively works in those who believe. God’s Word works, it doesn’t only bring information or produce feelings. There is power in the word of God to change lives.

**14For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, 15who killed both the Lord Jesus** Paul comforted these suffering Christians with the assurance that they were not the first to suffer this way. The Lord Jesus faced persecution, and the Christians in Judea faced it first. Additionally, Paul and his associates were also persecuted.

Here Paul wrote that his own countrymen (the Judeans) had killed… the Lord Jesus. But Paul knew well that the Jews of Judea were not the *only* ones responsible for the murder of Jesus. The Romans had their full share of guilt, so *both* Jew and Gentile were guilty.

**and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind** Paul advises that new believers should not be surprised by the hostility of certain Jews. He also advises them against being discouraged by their afflictions as though the gods were punishing them.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Paul also comforted the Thessalonian Christians with the awareness that *they* were right, that *they* are the ones pleasing God. This was necessary assurance because they were persecuted by religious people and might wonder if these other religious people were in fact right before God in their persecuting.

When the Thessalonians responded to the Gospel, they became the targets of persecution. As they did, they were not alone, because those among the churches of God have often suffered persecution. The Thessalonian Christians became imitators of those who had suffered before them. The Thessalonians willingly suffered the same things because they were convinced that Paul brought them not the word of man, but the Word of God. The word of man isn’t worth suffering for, but a true message from God is worth it.

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**16by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved** Non-Jewish people. God included the Gentiles in His redemptive plan (compare Isa 49:6). Paul recognized this and directed his missionary efforts to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 18:6; Gal 2:7–9).[[19]](#footnote-19)

Here Paul revealed what offended the religious persecutors of the Thessalonians so much. They were outraged that Gentiles could be saved without first becoming Jews. This exclusive attitude filled up the measure of their sins.

**—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!**

**2:17-3:5**

**Paul’s Longing to See Them Again. 2:17–3:13** Paul narrates his sudden departure from the Thessalonians to allay their fear that he abandoned them. He recounts his repeated but failed attempts to return to Thessalonica (vv. 17–20) and his decision to send Timothy to check on them when he could not return in person (3:1–10). After expressing his relief in response to Timothy’s positive report (3:6–10), Paul prays that his desire to return to Thessalonica will be fulfilled (3:11–13).[[20]](#footnote-20) Paul comforted the Thessalonians by assuring them that God would indeed take care of their persecutors. When Christians forget this, they often disgrace and curse themselves by returning persecution for persecution towards others.

**17But since we were torn away from you,** The Greek term used here, *aporphanizō*, describes separation between people. It was often used in the context of parent-child relationships in which it could describe either children who had been orphaned by their parents or parents who had lost their children. Here Paul depicts himself as a father cut off from his children—the Thessalonian believers (compare v. 11).[[21]](#footnote-21)

**brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face,** Paul knew that the Thessalonians appreciated the comfort he gave, but they wondered why he didn’t come and bring this comfort in person. They naturally thought that this would be much better. Yet Paul assured them that the reason was not a lack of love or desire on his part.

**18because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.** Satan is the enemy of God who opposes Paul and his apostolic ministry (e.g., 3:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 11:13–15; 12:7). Some of the Thessalonians likely worried that Paul abandoned them when he abruptly left the city and did not return (see note on 1 Thess 1:1–10). Paul assures the believers at Thessalonica that his separation from them was not his choice—Satan hindered him.[[22]](#footnote-22)

 It wasn’t that Paul did not *want* to visit the Thessalonians. It was that Satan hindered Paul and his associates. Paul assured the Thessalonians that he desired to be with them, but he was hindered by Satan, and that this happened time and again.

 The Thessalonians were mostly Gentile converts, yet when Paul mentioned **Satan** here, he gave no further explanation. This shows that in the few weeks he was there, Paul taught the Thessalonians much about Satan and spiritual warfare.

Paul, in all his apostolic ministry and authority, could still be blocked by Satan. But Paul did not just receive this Satanic hindrance in a fatalistic way. He did something about the hindrance.

i. First, Paul understood that this was *Satanic* hindrance. He knew this was not a random circumstance, but a direct attack from Satan. Paul had the discernment to know.

ii. Second, Paul had faith. **For a short time** means that Paul knew it would only be **a short time** until the roadblock was overcome.

iii. Third, Paul was committed to fight against the roadblock any way he could. If he couldn’t be there in person, his letter will go for him and teach and encourage them in his absence. Many scholars believe that 1 Thessalonians was Paul’s earliest letter written as an apostle to a church. If this is the case, then Satan’s roadblock got Paul started on writing letters to the churches. When Satan saw the great work God did through these letters, he regretted that he ever hindered Paul at all.

iv. Finally, God brought the victory. [Acts 20:1-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.1-5&t=NKJV) describes Paul’s eventual return to Thessalonica and to other churches in the area.

**19For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting** Paul shared similar words with the Philippians. See Phil 4:1[[23]](#footnote-23) Paul assured the Thessalonians that he could never forget them because they were his glory and his joy. His inability to visit should never be taken as a lack of love towards the Thessalonians.

**before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? 20For you are our glory and joy.** Perhaps Paul would say that he didn’t need a crown in heaven because these precious ones were his crown of victory. Those whom we bring to Jesus and disciple are a crown of victory for us.

**3 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone,** A city in the Roman province of Achaia (modern-day Greece). Paul visited Athens during his second missionary journey (Acts 17:10–34).[[24]](#footnote-24)

**2and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith,** The Greek word used here, *stērizō*, means to be resolved in belief or attitude. Paul sent Timothy to help the Thessalonians remain committed to the faith in the midst of their sufferings.[[25]](#footnote-25)

In the previous chapter Paul explained how much he wanted to be with the Thessalonians during their time of trial ([1 Thessalonians 2:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.17-18&t=NKJV)). However, since Paul could not be with the Thessalonians himself, he did the next best thing. He sent his trusted companion and fellow worker Timothy to them.

For the sake of the Thessalonians, Paul was willing to be left in Athens alone. It cost him something to send Timothy to the Thessalonians, and he thought it wasgood to pay that cost.

Paul wanted Timothy to do two things – to establish and encourage the Thessalonians. Both are necessary but *establishing* comes first. *Encouragement* can really only come after we are *established* in the right direction; otherwise, we are only *encouraged* in the wrong course.

**3that no one be moved by these afflictions.** As the Thessalonians were established and encouraged, they would not be shaken by these afflictions. Timothy’s ministry would help them to endure their present hardship.

**For you yourselves know that we are destined for this.** Paul reminds the new believers that persecution is not a sign of God’s wrath; rather, faith and suffering are both part of the Christian life (Phil 1:29). Since the Messiah, prophets, and apostles all suffered persecution (1 Thess 2:15), the Thessalonians should not be discouraged by their experience.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Paul wanted the Thessalonians to know that their time of present suffering was in God’s control. These were afflictions they were appointed to. As part of the normal Christian life, believers have an appointment with affliction.

i. Some believe that Christians shouldn’t suffer affliction and that God wants to teach us *only* by His Word, and not through trial or tribulation. It is true that there is a great deal of suffering we could be spared by simply obeying God’s Word, and God wants to spare us that suffering. Nevertheless, suffering was good enough to teach Jesus ([Hebrews 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.10&t=NKJV) and [5:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5.8&t=NKJV)), therefore it is good enough to teach us. God does teach the believer perseverance, obedience, how to comfort others, and deeper fellowship with Jesus in trials.

ii. Some believe that the only kind of affliction a Christian should experience is *persecution*. The truth is that there are two ancient Greek words used to translate the concept of suffering, and neither of them is used exclusively in regard to persecution. *Thilipsis* was used for such things as physical pain, emotional hardships, and suffering under temptation. *Pasko* was used for such things as physical sufferings unrelated to persecution, suffering under temptation, and hardships in a general sense.

iii. Some believe that affliction means God is angry at the believer. The truth is that affliction means that God loves us enough to give the *best* when we may only desire what is *easy*. The symbol of Christianity is the cross, not a feather bed. Affliction is just part of following Jesus; therefore, Paul recognized that Christians are appointed to affliction.

**4For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know.**

a. **We told you before when we were with you**: When Paul was with the Thessalonians (just a few months before writing this letter) he warned them they would suffer tribulation. Though he was only with them a few weeks, he taught them about the place of suffering in the Christian life.

b. **We would suffer tribulation**: In Jesus’ parable of the soils ([Matthew 13:1-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.1-23&t=NKJV)), He described the way that some fall away when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word – Jesus said *when* tribulation arises, and not *if* tribulation comes. The Christian’s faith will be tested. Paul knew this, and as a good pastor, he warned the Thessalonians.

**5For this reason, when I could bear it no longer,** Paul could barely endure the thought that the faith of the Thessalonians might crumble under this season of affliction, so he sent Timothy to both check on them and to help them.

**I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter**

Paul recognized that the tempter – that is, Satan – wanted to exploit this season of suffering. As in the case of Job, Satan wanted to tempt the Thessalonians to give up on God.

Refers to Satan (compare Matt 4:3; 1 Cor 7:5). Paul likely considered the Thessalonians to be especially vulnerable to temptation because they had converted to faith in Christ only recently. The nt frequently describes Satan’s attempts to take advantage of people who are either young in the faith or in a weakened state (e.g., 1 Cor 7:5; 1 Tim 3:6–7).[[27]](#footnote-27)

**had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.** If the Thessalonians did waver in their faith, Paul would consider his work among them to have been **in vain**. In the parable of the soils ([Matthew 13:1-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.1-23&t=NKJV)) Jesus described the seed that withered under the heat of trials. If the Thessalonians withered, Paul’s hard work as a farmer among them would have born no harvest.

i. Paul *did* something to help prevent the Thessalonians from falling under their affliction. He sent Timothy to them, because those who are in affliction need the help of other godly people.

**end**

**Timothy’s Encouraging Report**

**6But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love** When Timothy returned from his visit to the Thessalonians, he brought good news. The Thessalonians were doing well in faith and love, and Paul helped them to do even better with this letter he wrote.

**and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you—** Timothy also brought the good news that the Thessalonians had not believed the vicious and false rumors about Paul.

**7for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith.** Paul wrote this letter from Corinth, and his coming to that city was marked by difficulty. He said of his coming to Corinth, *I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling* ([1 Corinthians 2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.3&t=NKJV)). Yet since Timothy came back with good news, Paul had a renewed strength and freshness of life (for now we live). It made Paul feel much better that the Thessalonians were doing well.

**8For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. 9For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God,** Paul’s thanks and joy overflowed because he knew that they did stand fast in the Lord. Some find it easy to rejoice in the *material* prosperity in the life of others, but Paul honestly rejoiced in the *spiritual* prosperity of others.

**10as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face** Paul heard good news from Timothy, but it wasn’t enough. He wanted to see the face of the church family in Thessalonica. Paul wanted it enough to pray night and day… exceedingly that God would make a way for him to see them.

**and supply what is lacking in your faith?** In the midst of all this joy, Paul called attention to the fact that they were still lacking. Though the apostle repeatedly complimented them ([1 Thessalonians 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+1.3&t=NKJV), [1:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+1.7&t=NKJV), [2:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.13&t=NKJV), [2:19-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+2.19-20&t=NKJV), and [3:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+3.6&t=NKJV)), he was also concerned to perfect (*complete*) what is lacking in their faith.

**11Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you,** Paul was encouraged at the current state of the Thessalonians and by the fruit that Timothy’s ministry had there. Yet he still prayed that God would **direct** his **way to** the Thessalonians. This shows that though Paul valued the ministry others brought to them, he believed that they still needed the authoritative instruction and encouragement only the apostles could give.

i. This being true, we also need to be under apostolic influence. Paul and the rest have graduated to glory, but their *writings* remain. God has preserved the apostles’ teaching for us in the New Testament.

ii. The church is founded upon the apostles, with Christ Himself the chief cornerstone ([Ephesians 2:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.20&t=NKJV)). The foundation of the New Jerusalem is the twelve apostles ([Revelation 21:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.14&t=NKJV)). There was something significantly unique about the first-century apostles and prophets, and that unique ministry is preserved in the New Testament.

**12and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you,** This was not a loveless church, but they still had room to grown in love, because love is an essential mark of the Christian faith.

i. Jesus spoke of the essential place love has as an identifying mark of the Christian: *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another* ([John 13:35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+13.35&t=NKJV)). The Apostle John also emphasized this principle: *If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?* ([1 John 4:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+4.20&t=NKJV))

**13so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.** Paul knew that God wanted the Thessalonians to have their hearts established blameless in holiness. The idea behind holiness is to be set apart *from* the world and *unto* God. The genuinely *holy* person is separated *away from* the domination of sin and self and the world, and they are separated *to* God.

b. Your hearts blameless in holiness: The heart must be made holy first. The devil wants us to develop a holy *exterior* while neglecting the *interior*, like whitewashed tombs, full of death ([Matthew 23:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.27&t=NKJV)).

c. Blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Paul was reminded of Jesus’ return, because nothing can encourage us to holiness like remembering that Jesus might come today.

i. Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians emphasized three things that are important for every Christian today:

· First, he wanted to *be* with them, so they could benefit from his apostolic wisdom and authority.

· He wanted them to abound in love.

· He wanted them to be established in true heart-holiness.

**A Life Pleasing to God**

**4 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us** What Paul wrote in the following verses was nothing new to the Thessalonians. In the few weeks he was with them, he instructed them in these basic matters of Christian morality. Paul knew it was important to instruct new believers in these things.

**how you ought to walk and to please God,** Paul took it for granted that the Thessalonians understood that the purpose of their walk – their manner of living – was to please God and not themselves. When the Christian has this basic understanding, the following instruction regarding Biblical morality makes sense.

**just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.** Paul was thankful for the growth he saw in the Thessalonians, but still looked for them to abound more and more in a **walk** that would please God.

Abound more and more: This means that Christian maturity is never finished on this side of eternity. No matter how far a Christian has come in love and holiness, he or she can still abound more and more.

**2For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.** These were not suggestions from the pen of Paul. These are commandments from the Lord Jesus and must be received that way.

**3For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;** Paul gave these commands to a first-century Roman culture that was marked by sexual immorality. At this time in the Roman Empire, chastity and sexual purity were almost unknown virtues. Nevertheless, Christians were to take their standards of sexual morality from God and not from the culture.

Paul said this was a *commandment* ([1 Thessalonians 4:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.2&t=NKJV)). That word was a military term describing an order from an officer to a subordinate, and the order came from Jesus and not from Paul.

The ancient writer Demosthenes expressed the generally amoral view of sex in the ancient Roman Empire: “We keep prostitutes for pleasure; we keep mistresses for the day to day needs of the body; we keep wives for the faithful guardianship of our homes.”

Paul made it very clear what the **will** of God was for the Christian. The idea behind sanctification is to be *set apart*, and God wants us *set apart* from a godless culture and its sexual immorality. If our sexual behavior is no different than the Gentiles who do not knowGod, then we are not sanctified – set apart – in the way God wants us to be.

i. Those who do not know God do not have the spiritual resources to walk pure before the Lord; but Christians do. Therefore, Christians should live differently than those who do not know God.

We live differently than the world when we **abstain from sexual immorality**. The ancient Greek word translated **sexual immorality** (*porneia*) is a broad word, referring to any sexual relationship outside of the marriage covenant.

ii. The broad nature of the word *porneia* shows that it isn’t enough to just say that you have not had sexual intercourse with someone who is not your spouse. All sexual behavior outside of the marriage covenant is sin.

iii. God grants great sexual liberty in the marriage relationship ([Hebrews 13:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+13.4&t=NKJV)). But Satan’s not-very-subtle strategy is often to do all he can to *encourage* sex outside of marriage and to *discourage* sex in marriage.

**4that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,** We live differently than the world when we **possess** our body **in sanctification and in honor**. Immorality is the opposite of **honor** because it degrades and debases the self. Those who do not restrain their sexual desires act more like animals than humans, following every impulse without restraint.

 Some interpret this passage so that the **vessel** each one should **possess** is a wife, and that Paul here encouraged Christians to get married and express their sexuality in marriage instead of immorally. Yet it seems that instead, Paul meant to encourage each Christian to **possess** or hold his own body (**vessel**) in a way that honored God. Sexual immorality is a sin against one’s own body ([1 Corinthians 6:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.18&t=NKJV)).

**5not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;** This plainly means that the sexual conduct of the Christian should be *different* than the prevailing permissiveness of the day.

**6that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter,** When we are sexually immoral, we **take advantage of and defraud** others and we cheat them in greater ways than we can imagine. The adulterer defrauds his mate and children. The fornicator defrauds his future mate and children, and both defraud their illicit partner.

Repeatedly in [Leviticus 18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+18&t=NKJV) – a chapter where God instructed Israel on the matter of sexual morality – the idea is given that one may not *uncover* the nakedness of another not their spouse. The idea is that the nakedness of an individual *belongs* to his or her spouse and no one else, and it is a violation of God’s law to *give* that nakedness to anyone else, or for anyone else to *take* it.

**because the Lord is an avenger in all these things,**  This is the first of four reasons for sexual purity. We can trust that God will punish sexual immorality, and that no one gets away with this sin – even if it is undiscovered.

**as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.** This is the second reason why Christians should be sexually pure – because of our **call**. That **call** is not to **uncleanness**, but to **holiness**; therefore, sexual immorality is simply inconsistent with who we are in Jesus Christ.

Paul developed this same line of thought in [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.9-11&t=NKJV) and [6:15-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.15-20&t=NKJV), concluding with the idea that we should *glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s*.

**8Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God,** The third reason for sexual purity is because to reject God’s call to sexual purity is not rejecting man, but God Himself. Despite the petty ways many rationalize sexual immorality, we still **reject** God when we sin in this way.

 Paul’s strong command here did not seem to come because the Thessalonians were deep in sin. No specific sin is mentioned; it seems that this was meant to *prevent* sin rather than to *rebuke* sin, in light of the prevailing low standards in their society and because of the seductive strength of sexual immorality.

**who gives his Holy Spirit to you.** This is the fourth of four reasons for sexual purity given in this passage. We have been given the Holy Spirit, who *empowers* the willing, trusting Christian to overcome sexual sin. By His Spirit, God has given us the resources for victory; we are responsible to use those resources.

**9Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,** These principles are so basic that Paul knew they were obvious to the Thessalonian Christians. The Thessalonians were **taught by God** about the importance of love, yet we must all be reminded.

**10for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia.** It wasn’t that the Thessalonians were without love; their love **toward all the brethren** was well known, but they had to **increase more and more** in their love.

**But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, 11and to aspire to live quietly,** This means that we should have an *aspiration* or *ambition* in life, and that we should **aspire to lead a quiet life**.

**Aspire** has the thought of ambition and is translated that way in several versions of the Bible. **Quiet** has the thought of peace, calm, rest and satisfaction.

The **quiet life** contradicts the hugely successful modern attraction to entertainment and excitement. This addiction to entertainment and excitement is damaging both spiritually and culturally. We might say that excitement and entertainment are like a religion for many people today.

· This religion has a god: The self.

· This religion has priests: Celebrities.

· This religion has a prophet: Perpetual entertainment.

· This religion has scriptures: Tabloids and entertainment, news, and informational programs.

· This religion has places of worship: Amusement parks, theaters, concert halls, sports arenas; and we could say that every television and internet connection is a little chapel.

iii. The religion of excitement and entertainment seduces people into living their lives for one thing – the thrill of the moment. But these thrills are quickly over and forgotten, and all that is important is the next fun thing. This religion conditions its followers to only ask one question: “Is it fun?” It never wants us to ask more important questions such as, “Is it true?” “Is it right?” “Is it good?” “Is it godly?”

We need to live the **quiet life** so that we can really take the time and give the attention to listen to God. When we live the **quiet life**, we can listen to God and get to know Him better.

**and to mind your own affairs,** This means that the Christian must focus on his or her own life and matters, instead of meddling in the lives of others. “**Mind your own business**” is a Biblical idea.

“Paul, however, does not mean that every individual is to mind his own business in such a way that all are to live apart from one another and have no concern for others, but simply wants to correct the idle triviality which makes men open disturbers of the peace, when they ought to lead a quiet life at home.” (Clarke)

**and to work with your hands, as we instructed you,** We must recognize the dignity and honor of **work**. Work is God’s plan for the progress of society and the church. We fall into Satan’s snare when we expect things to always come easily, or regard God’s blessing as an opportunity for laziness.

Manual labor was despised by ancient Greek culture. They thought that the better a man was, the less he should work. In contrast, God gave us a carpenter King, fisherman apostles, and tent-making missionaries.

**12so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.** When we combine the love of our brothers with work, we **walk properly**. People who are not yet Christians (**those who are outside**) will see our example and be influenced to become followers of Jesus.

Paul completes the thought he began in [1 Thessalonians 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+3.10&t=NKJV) (*that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith*). If they followed his teaching and example, they would **lack nothing** and come to the place of genuine Christian maturity.

**The Coming of the Lord**

**13But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep,**

In the few weeks Paul was with the Thessalonians, he emphasized the soon return of Jesus, and the Thessalonians believed it earnestly. This was part of the reason that they were the kind of church Paul complimented so highly. Yet after Paul left, they wondered about those Christians who died *before* Jesus came back. They were troubled by the idea that these Christians might miss out on that great future event and that they might miss the victory and blessing of Jesus’ coming.

i. It is with some interest we note that four times in his letters, Paul asked Christians to *not* be **ignorant** about something:

· Don’t be ignorant about God’s plan for Israel ([Romans 11:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.25&t=NKJV)).

· Don’t be ignorant about spiritual gifts ([1 Corinthians 12:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+12.1&t=NKJV)).

· Don’t be ignorant about suffering and trials in the Christian life ([2 Corinthians 1:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+1.8&t=NKJV)).

· Don’t be ignorant about the rapture and the second coming of Jesus ([1 Thessalonians 4:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.13&t=NKJV)).

Remarkably, these are areas where ignorance is still common in the Christian world.

Unaware/1 Corinthians 10:1. 2 Peter

*Sleep* was a common way to express death in the ancient world, but among pagans, it was almost always seen as an *eternal* sleep.

i. Ancient writings are full of this pessimism regarding death:

· “Of a man once dead there is no resurrection.” (Aeschylus)

· “Hopes are among the living, the dead are without hope.” (Theocritus)

· “Suns may set and rise again but we, when once our brief light goes down, must sleep an endless night.” (Catullus)

ii. Christians called death *sleep*, but they emphasized the idea of *rest*. Early Christians began to call their burial places “cemeteries,” which means, “dormitories” or “sleeping places.” Yet the Bible never describes the death of the unbeliever as *sleep*, for there is no rest, peace, or comfort for them in death.

**that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.** For the Christian death is dead, and leaving this body is like laying down for a nap and waking in glory. It is *moving*, not *dying*. For these reasons, Christians should not **sorrow as others who have no hope** when their loved ones in Jesus die.

As Christians, we may mourn the death of other Christians; but not **as others who have no hope**. Our sorrow is like the sadness of seeing someone off on a long trip, knowing you will see them again, but not for a long time.

**14For since we believe that Jesus died** When Paul wrote about the death of believers, he called it **sleep**. But in his description of Jesus’ death, he did not soften it by calling it **sleep**, because there was nothing soft or peaceful about His death.

Burial places were dormitories, cemeteries, places of sleep.

Sleep is only used for the saved, not for the unsaved, for them is death.

**and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.** We have more than a wishful hope of resurrection. In the resurrection of Jesus, we have an amazing example of it and a promise of our own.

This was the confident belief of the Apostle Paul and the early Christians. We will certainly live, because Jesus lives and our union with Him is stronger than death. This is why we do not sorrow as those who have no hope and why we have more than a wishful hope.

i. When a sinner dies, we mourn for them. When a believer dies, we only mourn for ourselves, because they are with the Lord.

ii. In the ruins of ancient Rome, you can see the magnificent tombs of pagans, with gloomy inscriptions on them. One of them reads:

I WAS NOT  
I BECAME  
I AM NOT  
I CARE NOT

Or one can visit the murky catacombs and read glorious inscriptions. One of the most common Christian epitaphs from the catacombs was IN PEACE, quoting [Psalm 4:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+4.8&t=NKJV): *I will both lie down in peace and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety*. We should look at death the same way those early Christians did.

iii. Sadly, not all Christians are at this place of confidence and peace. Even Christians have, in unbelief, had the same fear and hopelessness about death. The author once read an inscription reflecting this un-Christian despair on an Irish tombstone in a Christian cemetery on the Hill of Slane, outside of Dublin:

*O cruel Death you well may boast  
Of all Tyrants thou art the most  
As you all mortals can control  
The Lord have mercy on my soul*(1782)

**15For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord,** Paul emphasized that this was an authoritative command, though we do not know whether Paul received it by direct revelation or if it was an unrecorded saying of Jesus. One way or another, this came from Jesus and did not originate with Paul.

**that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.**

Paul wanted the Thessalonians to know that those who are asleep – Christians who have died before Jesus returns – will by no means be at a disadvantage. Those who are alive and remainuntil the coming of the Lord will by no means precede them. God will allow those who areasleep to share in the glory of the coming of the Lord.

We who are alive means that Paul himself shared in this expectancy. It wasn’t because Paul had an erroneous promise of the return of Jesus in his lifetime. “More feasible is the solution that sees Paul setting an example of expectancy for the church of all ages. Proper Christian anticipation includes the imminent return of Christ.” (Thomas)

**16For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command,**

When Jesus comes, He will come *personally*. The Lord Himself will descend and come with a shout. The ancient Greek word for shout here is the same word used for the commands that a ship captain makes to his rowers, or a commander speaking to his soldiers. “Always there is the ring of authority and the note of urgency.” (Morris)

 Apparently, there will be some audible signal that prompts this remarkable event. It may be that all three descriptions (shout, voice, and trumpet) refer to the same sound; or there may be three distinct sounds. The rapture will not be silent or secret, though the vast majority of people may not understand the sound or its meaning.

When Paul heard the heavenly voice on the road to Damascus ([Acts 9:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+9.7&t=NKJV); [22:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+22.9&t=NKJV)), his companions heard the sound of a voice, but they did not hear articulate words. They heard a sound but did not understand its meaning. It may well be that the shout/voice/trumpet sound that accompanies the rapture will have the same effect. The entire world may hear this heavenly sound but have no idea what its meaning is.

**Acts 9:7**The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.

**22:9**Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.[[28]](#footnote-28)

**with the voice of an archangel,**

This doesn’t mean that the Lord Himself is an archangel. The only one described as an archangel in the Bible is Michael ([Jude 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.9&t=NKJV)). Paul means that when Jesus comes, He will come in the company of prominent angels.

**and with the sound of the trumpet of God.**

Believers are gathered **with the trumpet of God**. In the Old Testament, trumpets sounded the alarm for war and threw the enemy into a panic, in the sense of the seven trumpets described in [Numbers 10:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+10.9&t=NKJV) and [Revelation 8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+8&t=NKJV) and [Revelation 9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+9&t=NKJV). Trumpets also sounded an assembly of God’s people, as in [Leviticus 23:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+23.24&t=NKJV) and [Numbers 10:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+10.2&t=NKJV). Here, the trumpet of God gathers together God’s people.

There are three other associations of trumpets and end-times events. One is the *last trump* of [1 Corinthians 15:52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.52&t=NKJV), which seems clearly to be connected with this same trumpet of [1 Thessalonians 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4&t=NKJV). The others are the seven trumpets which culminate at [Revelation 11:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+11.15&t=NKJV), and the trumpet gathering the elect of Israel at the end of the age in [Matthew 24:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.31&t=NKJV).

**52**in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed[[29]](#footnote-29)

**15**Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

**31**And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. [[30]](#footnote-30)

Hiebert compares this trumpet of [1 Thessalonians 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4&t=NKJV) and the seventh trumpet of [Revelation 11:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+11.15&t=NKJV): “The subjects are different: here it is the church; there a wicked world. The results are different: here it is the glorious catching up of the church to be with the Lord; there it is further judgment upon a godless world. Here ‘the last trump’ signals the close of the life of the church on earth; there the ‘seventh’ trumpet marks a climax in a progressive series of apocalyptic judgments upon the living on earth.”

As to the trumpet of [1 Thessalonians 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4&t=NKJV) and the one mentioned in [Matthew 24:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.31&t=NKJV), we can also observe:

· The *subjects* are different: Matthew refers to Jewish believers during the great tribulation; Thessalonians refers to the church.

· The *circumstances* are different: Matthew refers to a gathering of the elect scattered over the earth, with no mention of resurrection; Thessalonians refers to the raising of the believing dead.

· The *results* are different: Matthew refers to living believers gathered from all over the earth at the command of their Lord who has returned to earth in open glory; Thessalonians refers to the uniting of the raised dead with the living believers to meet the Lord in the air.

**And the dead in Christ will rise first.**

Paul’s point to the Thessalonians is clear. The prior dead in Christ will not be left out of either the resurrection or the return of Jesus. In fact, they will experience it first.

 Many wonder how the dead in Christ are raised first. Some believe that they now have temporary bodies and await this resurrection. Others believe that they are now disembodied spirits who wait for resurrection. Still others conjecture that the dead in Christ experience their resurrection immediately.

There will come a day, when in God’s eternal plan, the dead in Christ will receive their resurrection bodies. Yet until that day, we are confident that the dead in Christ are not in some kind of soul sleep or suspended animation. Paul made it clear that to be *absent from the body* means *to be present with the Lord*. ([2 Corinthians 5:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.8&t=NKJV)) Either the present dead in Christ are with the Lord in a spiritual body, awaiting their final resurrection body; or, because of the nature of timeless eternity, they have received their resurrection bodies already because they live in the eternal *now*.

**17Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**

Those alive and remaining until this coming of Jesus are caught up to meet Jesus in the air, together with the dead in Jesus who have already risen.

Meet, (apantesis) go and meet with the intention of coming back where you came from. Acts 28:15, go out meet Paul and bring him back. Matthew 25:6 10 virgins, meet bridegroom and bring him back to start the wedding banquet.

God has to purify the earth with fire and we come back to the earth. We’re still going to use this place, otherwise, Satan would have won.

Paul’s plain language leaves no doubt regarding the certainty of this event. Yet the timing of this event in the chronology of God’s prophetic plan is a matter of significant debate among Christians.

The *manner* in which Jesus will gather us to Himself is impressive. But the main point is that whatever the state of the Christians (dead or alive) at the Lord’s coming, they will always be with the Lord. This is the great reward of heaven – to be with Jesus. Death can’t break our unity with Jesus or with other Christians.

**18Therefore encourage one another with these words.** Paul did not tell them to *take* comfort, but to *give* comfort. In the way God works, we always *receive* comfort as we *give* it.

The truth of the return of Jesus for His people, and the eternal union of Jesus and His people is to be a source of **comfort** for Christians.

This concluding statement of Paul only makes sense if the catching away of the previous verses actually delivers Christians from an impending danger. If the catching away only brings humanity to God for judgment, there is little comfort in these words.

This was understood by Adam Clarke: “Strange saying! Comfort a man with the information that he is going to appear before the judgment-seat of God! Who can feel comfort from these words?”

**The Day of the Lord**

**5 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord**

The day of the Lord so comes: With this phrase, Paul quoted a familiar Old Testament idea. The idea behind the phrase the day of the Lord is that this is *Gods’* time. Man has his “day,” and the Lord has His day. In the ultimate sense, the day of the Lord is fulfilled with Jesus judging the earth and returning in glory.

**will come like a thief in the night.**

Paul certainly was not one to set dates in regard to prophecy, and Jesus forbade setting dates when He said *of that day and hour no one knows* ([Matthew 24:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.36&t=NKJV)). God *wants* this day to be unexpected, but He wants His people to be prepared for the unexpected.

*“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.”*

**3While people are saying, “There is peace and security,”**

The unexpected nature of that day will be a tragedy for the unbeliever. They will be lulled to sleep by political and economic conditions, but they will be rudely awakened. They will hear the frightening verdict “they shall not escape.”

This sudden coming, in a time when many say “Peace and safety!” must be distinct from the coming of Jesus described in [Matthew 24:15-35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.15-35&t=NKJV). The coming of Jesus described in [Matthew 24:15-35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.15-35&t=NKJV) happens at a time of great global catastrophe, when no one could possibly say “peace and safety!” Comparing passages like this shows us that there must be, in some way, *two aspects* to Jesus’ Second Coming.

· One aspect of His coming is at an unexpected hour, the other is positively predicted.

· One coming is to a “business as usual” world, the other to a world in cataclysm.

· One coming is meeting Him in the air ([1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.16-17&t=NKJV)), the other is Him coming with the saints ([Zechariah 14:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+14.5&t=NKJV)).

**then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.**

The phrase labor pains suggest both *inevitability* and *unexpectedness*. Jesus used the same idea in [Matthew 24:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.8&t=NKJV), when He spoke of calamities preceding the end times as *the beginning of sorrows*, which is literally *the beginning of labor pains*. The idea is both of giving birth to a new age and implying an increase of intensity and frequency in these calamities.

**4But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.**

In addressing their behavior, Paul first simply told the Thessalonian Christians that they should *be* who they *are*. God has made us sons of the light and sons of the day. The time when we were of the night or of the darkness is in the past. So now we simply have to live up to what God has made us.

Paul means that this should *not* happen for the believer who lives according to their nature as a son of light and son of the day. They will be ready for the return of Jesus Christ.

In some respect, the coming of Jesus will be a surprise for *everybody*, because no one knows the day or the hour ([Matthew 24:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.36&t=NKJV)). But for Christians who know the *times and the seasons*, it will not be a complete surprise. No one knows the exact hour a thief will come, but some live in a general preparation against thieves. Those who are not in darkness, who live as they are all sons of light and sons of the day, these are ready for the return of Jesus.

But if we *are*indarkness – perhaps caught up in some of the sin Paul warned against previously in this letter – then we are *not* ready and need to make ourselves ready for the return of Jesus.

**6So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.**

Because we do not belong to the *night nor of darkness* ([1 Thessalonians 5:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+5.5&t=NKJV)), our spiritual condition should never be marked by sleep. Spiritually speaking, we need to be active and aware, to watch and be sober.

Not sleep: Paul used a different word here than for the sleep of death mentioned in [1 Thessalonians 4:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.13&t=NKJV). “The word *sleep* is here used metaphorically to denote indifference to spiritual realities on the part of believers. It is a different word than that in 4:13-15 for the sleep of death. It covers all sorts of moral and spiritual laxity or insensibility.” (Hiebert)

ii. **Sleep** speaks of so much that belongs to the world (the others), but should not belong to Christians:

· Sleep speaks of *ignorance*.

· Sleep speaks of *insensibility*.

· Sleep speaks of *no defense*.

· Sleep speaks of *inactivity*.

**7For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8But since we belong to the day, let us be sober,**

In commanding sobriety, Paul didn’t have in mind the sort of people who stamp down all enthusiasm and excitement for Jesus, promoting what they think is a more balanced way to live. Paul himself was an enthusiastic follower of Jesus and accused of religious fanaticism. The Roman official Festus thought Paul was mad ([Acts 26:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+26.24&t=NKJV)), and the Corinthians thought he was beside himself ([2 Corinthians 5:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.13&t=NKJV)).

The opposite of spiritual *watchfulness* is spiritual sleep. The opposite of spiritual *sobriety* is to be *spiritually*drunk. As Christians we are of the day, and so we must watch and be sober.

**having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.**

Paul used the images of a soldier’s armor to illustrate the idea of *watchfulness*. A soldier is a good example of someone who must watch and be sober, and he is *equipped* to do that with his armor.

i. When one compares this description of spiritual armor with that found in [Ephesians 6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6&t=NKJV), there is not an exact correlation. This indicates that Paul saw the idea of spiritual armor as a helpful picture, not something rigid in its particular details.

ii. **Faith and love** are represented by **the breastplate** because the **breastplate** covers the vital organs. No soldier would ever go to battle without his **breastplate**, and no Christian is equipped to live the Christian life without **faith and love**.

iii. **The hope of salvation** is represented **as a helmet**, because the **helmet** protects the head, which is just as essential as the **breastplate**. **Hope** isn’t used in the sense of wishful thinking, but in the sense of a confident expectation of God’s hand in the future.

Isaiah 59:17

**17** He put on righteousness as a breastplate,

and a helmet of salvation on his head; [[31]](#footnote-31)

Eph. 6: 17**13**Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. **14**Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, **15**and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. **16**In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; **17**and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God[[32]](#footnote-32)

**9For God has not destined us for wrath,**

Wrath: It is important to understand that Paul means the wrath*of God*. We are saved from the world, the flesh, and the devil. But first and foremost, we are rescued from the wrath of God, the wrath that *we deserve*. Paul’s whole context here is the believer’s rescue from the wrath of God.

Our appointment **to wrath** was appointed in two ways. First, because of what Adam did to us and the whole human race, we are appointed **to wrath** ([Romans 5:14-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+5.14-19&t=NKJV)). Second, because of our own sin, we are appointed to wrath. When Jesus died on the cross, He stood in our place in our appointment **to wrath** and reschedules us with an appointment **to obtain salvation**. As believers, when we think we are appointed **to wrath**, we show up for an appointment that was cancelled by Jesus.

Rormans 8:18

**but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

Jesus’ death isn’t softened by calling it *sleep*, but our death can be called sleep. His death was *death*, so that ours would only be sleep.

**10who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.**

Who died for us: The idea is that *Jesus died in our place*. Not simply that Jesus died for us in the sense as a favor for us; but that He **died** as a *substitute* for us.

Paul again tells us not to *take* comfort, but to *give*comfort. If all Christians have a heart to comfort each other, then all will be comforted.

To edify means to *build up*. When we have our first interest in building up other Christians, then God will edify us. The idea is of a church full of active participants, not passive spectators.

It wasn’t that there was no **comfort** among the Thessalonians, or as if no one was edified. But they had to *continue* to comfort others, and to do it *more and more*.

**Final Instructions and Benediction**

**12We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you**

Christians are to **recognize** their leaders, and leaders are described in three ways.

**Those who labor among you**. Leaders are recognized not by their title but by their *service*. A title is fine; but only if the title is true and if the title describes what that person really is before God and man.

**and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,**

**And are over you in the Lord**. Leaders are recognized as being “**over**” the congregation in the sense of ruling and providing headship, as a shepherd is **over** the sheep. This describes a clear and legitimate order of authority.

**And admonish you**. Leaders are recognized as those who **admonish** the congregation. To **admonish** means “to caution or to reprove gently; to warn.” Morris says of this word, “While its tone is brotherly, it is big-brotherly.”

**13and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.**

Christians are to esteem their leaders, and to esteem them very highly in love. They should do this for their work’s sake. They don’t deserve esteem because of their title, or because of their personality, but because of their labor on behalf of God’s people.

**14And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle**,(unruly) **encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.**

With this simple command Paul said Christians should simply put away all their squabbles and arguments. This is a great way to esteem and love the leaders of your church.

Paul told the Thessalonians – the people, not only the pastor and leaders – to minister in a variety of ways, depending on the state of the person who needs the ministry. So if someone is **unruly**, the duty of the Christian is to **warn** them. Others need **comfort**, others need to be upheld.

i. The **unruly** are those who are *out of order*, using a military word that describes the soldier who breaks ranks or marches out of step. This is the self-willed person who simply demands to hold his own opinion or preference. These must be warned.

ii. The **fainthearted** are those who, literally, are *small-souled*. By nature or experience they tend to be timid and lack courage. These need comfort – in the sense of assisting strength – to be brought to them.

iii. The **weak** must be upheld and assisted with an eye to building their own strength instead of perpetuating their weakness.

iv. Some see Paul addressing these three groups in earlier passages of 1 Thessalonians. If so, they provide good examples of how to speak to individuals from each category.

· **Unruly**: The idlers of [1 Thessalonians 4:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.11-12&t=NKJV).

· **Fainthearted**: Those anxious about their departed loved ones in [1 Thessalonians 4:14-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.14-17&t=NKJV).

· **Weak**: Those suffering under temptations to lapse into immorality in [1 Thessalonians 4:2-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.2-8&t=NKJV).

**15See that no one repays anyone evil for evil,**

The Christian never should seek revenge or vengeance, but let God take up our side. Instead, we must always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. When we have a forgiving heart towards others, not only is it good for them, it is good for ourselves.

**but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 16Rejoice always,**

Not only rejoicing in happy things, but in sorrows also. The Christian can rejoice always because their joy isn’t based in circumstances, but in God. Circumstances change, but God doesn’t.

**17pray without ceasing,**

Christians are to pray continually. We can’t bow our heads, close our eyes, and fold our hands **without ceasing**, but those are *customs* of prayer, not prayer itself. Prayer is communication with God, and we can live each minute of the day in a constant, flowing, conversation with God.

i. There is significant, important value in a time where we shut out all other distractions and focus on God in a time of closet prayer ([Matthew 6:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+6.6&t=NKJV)). But there is also room – and great value – in every-moment-of-the-day fellowship with God.

ii. There are many valuable implications from this command:

· The use of the voice is not an essential element in prayer.

· The posture of prayer is not of primary importance.

· The place of prayer is not of great importance.

· The particular time of prayer is not important.

· A Christian should never be in a place where he *could not* pray.

**18give thanks in all circumstances;**

We don’t give thanks*for* everything, but in everything. We recognize God’s sovereign hand is in charge, and not blind fate or chance.

**for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

The thought isn’t “this is God’s will, so you *must* do it.” The thought is rather “this is God’s will, so you *can* do it.” It isn’t easy to **rejoice always, pray without ceasing**, and **in everything give thanks**, but we can do it because it is God’s will.

**19Do not quench the Spirit.**

We can **quench** the fire of the **Spirit** by our doubt, our indifference, our rejection of Him, or by the distraction of others. When people start to draw attention to *themselves*, it is a sure **quench** to **the Spirit**.

i. “‘Quench’ properly applies to the putting out of a flame of some sort, as that of a fire ([Mark 9:48](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+9.48&t=NKJV)), or a lamp ([Matthew 25:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.8&t=NKJV)). This is the only place in the New Testament where it is used in a metaphorical sense.” (Morris) Thomas says that the phrase could be more literally translated, “Stop putting out the Spirit’s fire.”

ii. Therefore, this command is based on the familiar image of the Holy Spirit as a fire or a flame. Though there is a sense in which fire cannot be created, we can provide the environment in which it can burn brightly. Yet a flame can be extinguished when it is ignored and no longer tended, or when the flame is overwhelmed by something else. In the tabernacle, the minora had to be lit at all times.

**20Do not despise prophecies, 21but test everything; hold fast what is good.**

We recognize that the Lord speaks to and through His people today, and we learn to be open to His voice. Of course, we always *test* prophecies (following the command to **test all things**), but we do not **despise** prophecies.

It is very possible that prophesy was being despised because individuals were abusing the gift. There were idlers among the Thessalonians ([1 Thessalonians 4:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.11-12&t=NKJV)), perhaps who spiritualized their idleness with prophecy. There were date-setters and end-times speculators among the Thessalonians ([2 Thessalonians 2:1-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+2.1-5&t=NKJV)), perhaps who backed up their speculations with supposed prophetic authority.

Evil and deception can show itself even in a spiritual setting, so it is important for Christians to **test all things**. When the **test** has been made (according to the standard of God’s Word and the discernment of spirit among the leaders), we then **hold fast** to **what is good**.

Between the time Paul last saw the Thessalonians and the writing of this letter, he had spent time in Berea ([Acts 17:10-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+17.10-12&t=NKJV)). There, the Christians were of a noble character because they heard Paul’s preaching and diligently searched the Scriptures to see if what he said was true. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to have more of the heart and mind of the Bereans.

**22Abstain from every form of evil.**

When the testing is made, any aspect of evil must be rejected. This includes evil that may come with a spiritual image.

**23Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely,**

The idea behind the word sanctify is “to set apart” – to make something different and distinct, breaking old associations and forming a new association. For example, a dress is a dress; but a wedding dress is *sanctified* – set apart for a special, glorious purpose. God wants us to be *set apart* to Him.

Paul made it clear that sanctification is God’s work in us. He puts this emphasis in the words Himself, in be preserved, in He who calls you is faithful, and in who will do it. This emphasis completes Paul’s previous exhortations. In all that he told the Christian to *do* in [1 Thessalonians 4:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.1&t=NKJV) through [1 Thessalonians 5:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+5.22&t=NKJV), he never intended that they *do* those things in their own power. More Christians are defeated on account of self-reliance than on account of Satanic attack.

**and may your whole spirit and soul**

Paul’s use of spirit, soul, and body in this passage has led many to adopt what is called a *trichotimist* view of man, believing that man is made up of three distinct parts: spirit, soul, and body.

This view has some merit, but also has problems. One might say that [Mark 12:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+12.30&t=NKJV) divides man’s nature into four parts (*heart, soul, mind*, and *strength*), and that [1 Corinthians 7:34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+7.34&t=NKJV) divides man’s nature into two parts (*body* and *spirit*). In some passages the terms *soul* and *spirit* seem to be synonymous, other times they seem to be distinct and hard to define precisely. It seems that there are indeed these three different aspects to the human person, yet the specific meaning of *spirit* or *soul* must be determined by the context.

We may receive this order as inspired. God intends there to be a hierarchy within the human person, ordered first with the spirit, then with the soul, and finally with the body.

This is not to say that the body is inherently evil; that contradicts Paul’s main thought here, that the *entire* person is set apart and preserved by God, complete in **spirit, soul, and body**. God saves our body as much as our spirit or soul, and the body has a definite and important role in the whole plan of salvation – to be resurrected into a new body.

Yet, God designed the human to live after the order of **spirit, soul, and body** instead of *body, soul, spirit*. We are to sublimate the needs of the *body* to the *soul*, and the needs of both *body and soul* to the needs of the *spirit*.

**and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.**

**25Brothers, pray for us.**

**26Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.**

**27I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.** Paul used a strong phrase here. It was important that **this epistle be read** among Christians. This is an unusual statement, unique in Paul’s letters. Many different reasons have been suggested for why Paul added this phrase at the end of his letter.

· Since this was his first letter, there was as of yet no established custom of the public reading of his letters, and he wanted to make sure the practice was established.

· Since the letter was a substitute for his personal presence, Paul did not want any disappointment at his absence to dampen the spread of the letter.

· Paul wanted to make sure that the church heard the letter first-hand, and not through intermediaries who might misstate his message.

· Perhaps Paul feared that people would look up passages in the letter that spoke to the issues that interested them the most and ignore the other parts.

**28The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.**

Nearly all Paul’s letters begin and end with the idea of **grace**. This is also true of almost everything God has to say to His people.

**Grace** is God’s unmerited favor, His bestowal of love and acceptance on us because of who He is and what Jesus has done. **Grace** means that He likes us, and all the reasons are in Him. **Grace** means we can stop working for His love and start receiving it.

ii. It is appropriate that this letter – the first of Paul’s preserved correspondence to the churches – this letter full of love, encouragement, and instruction, end on a note of **grace**.

2 Thessalonians

**Introduction**

This letter from the apostle Paul was probably written shortly after his first letter to the church in Thessalonica. He had been boasting of them to other churches, telling of their faith and their love for each other in the face of persecution. Paul reminded them that God will repay their persecutors. He also addressed two recurring problems in this church. First, they were concerned that the Lord had already returned. Paul urged them not to become “shaken in mind or alarmed,” fearing that “the day of the Lord” (2:2) had already come. Second, he admonished them not to be idle, commanding them that, “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat” (3:10).

Someone may have forged a letter in Paul’s name, claiming the Day of the Lord had already come. For this reason, Paul signs this letter with a distinguishing mark[[33]](#footnote-33)

**Greeting**

**1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,** Paul traveled with these men and together they contributed to this letter. Though the name **Paul** is listed first, both **Silvanus** and **Timothy**were his trusted companions.

**Silvanus** (also known as *Silas*) was a long and experienced companion of Paul. He traveled with Paul on his second missionary journey and was imprisoned and set free with Paul in the Philippian jail ([Acts 16:19-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.19-27&t=NKJV)). When Paul first came to Thessalonica, Silas came with him ([Acts 17:1-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+17.1-9&t=NKJV)), so the Thessalonians knew **Silvanus** well. He also collaborated with Paul on the first letter to the Thessalonians ([1 Thessalonians 1:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+1.1&t=NKJV)).

**Timothy** was a resident of Lystra, a city in the province of Galatia ([Acts 16:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.1-3&t=NKJV)). He was the son of a Greek father ([Acts 16:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.1&t=NKJV)), and a Jewish mother named Eunice ([2 Timothy 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+1.5&t=NKJV)). From his youth, he had been taught in the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother ([2 Timothy 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+1.5&t=NKJV); [3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.15&t=NKJV)). Timothy was a trusted companion and associate of Paul, and he accompanied Paul on many of his missionary journeys. Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonians on a previous occasion ([1 Thessalonians 3:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+3.2&t=NKJV)). With Silvanus, Timothy was also a collaborator on Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians ([1 Thessalonians 1:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+1.1&t=NKJV)).

**To the church of the Thessalonians** Paul himself founded the church in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey ([Acts 17:1-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+17.1-9&t=NKJV)). He was only in the city a short time because he was forced out by enemies of the Gospel. But **the church of the Thessalonians** left behind was alive and active. Paul’s deep concern for this young church, which he had to suddenly leave, prompted this letter – following after the letter of 1 Thessalonians.

**in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:**

**2Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (**Greek, One Source)

**Thanksgiving**

**3We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. 4Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.** This faith and love, thriving in the midst of persecutionsand tribulations, made Paul boast of the Thessalonians to other churches.

**The Judgment at Christ’s Coming**

**5This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—**

We usually think that God is *absent* when we suffer, and that our suffering calls God’s righteous judgment into question. Paul took the exact opposite position and insisted that the Thessalonians’ suffering was evidence of the righteous judgment of God. Where suffering is coupled with righteous endurance, God’s work is done. The fires of persecution and tribulation were like the purifying fires of a refiner, burning away the dross from the gold, bringing forth a pure, precious metal.

You are being persecuted! Where are you God! Paul is saying the opposite!

**6since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,**

God was also shown as **righteous** when those who persecuted the Thessalonians were repaid with **tribulation** according to their evil works. They probably believed they did God a favor when they persecuted the Christians, but the **righteous** God would **repay** them and not *reward* them.

We can see a statement like [2 Thessalonians 1:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+1.6&t=NKJV) in much the same context as those passages in the Psalms where the writer happily wishes ill upon his enemies – they are a prayer of entrusting the judgment of these enemies to *God*, instead of personally taking the initiative.

Note: those persecuting Paul were doing it for religious reasons, they thought they were doing God a favor. You are suffering and it seems like they are winning. Doubts?

**7and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us,** The Thessalonian Christians were persecuted and had tribulation; and God used it for His glory. But the time of persecution would not last. A day of **rest** is promised for every believer.

**when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels**

**8in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God** (even though they think they do) **and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9They will suffer the punishment of eternal** (aniliation) **destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,**

It isn’t the fire that makes hell what it is. In the fiery furnace, the three Jewish young men were completely comfortable, as long as the Lord was with them in the fire ([Daniel 3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+3&t=NKJV)). What truly characterizes hell is that there, people are **from the presence of the Lord**, in the sense of being apart from anything *good* or *blessed* in God’s presence. **From the presence of the Lord**sums up the Bible’s understanding of hell. Nothing must be said more about its horrors, other than hell will be completely devoid of God and every aspect of His character, except one: His unrelenting holy justice.

We must not be moved from the idea that the punishment of the wicked is **everlasting**. As the blessings of heaven are eternal, the penalty of hell is also eternal. “The perpetual duration of this death is proved from the fact that its opposite is the glory of Christ. This is eternal and has no end.” (Calvin).

And Satan and his demons will also be suffering. Hell is not the abode of Satan.

**10when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.** For the persecuted **saints**, those **who believe**, they will have God **glorified in** them on that **Day**, and they will see and admire Jesus more than ever.

This shows the difference between one destined for judgment and one destined for glory. The difference is belief in the message Paul preached (**our testimony**), the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul knew what it was like to be transformed from a persecutor to the persecuted. He believed the **testimony** of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and it changed his life.

**11To this end we always pray for you,** Since the Thessalonian Christians were in the midst of persecution and tribulation, they needed prayer. Here, Paul assured them that he and his associates **pray always** for them.

**that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, 12so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

God gives Christians a high **calling**, mentioned in the previous sentence. The **calling** is to see Him glorified in us at His coming. Paul rightly prays that the Thessalonians may be counted **worthy of this calling**,

and he shows ways to fulfill this calling.

i. We live worthy of His call when we **fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness**, living lives *touched* by **His goodness**, and *displaying***His goodness**.

ii. We live worthy of His call when we **fulfill … the work of faith with power**, believing on Jesus and seeing His work done all around us by faith.

iii. We live worthy of His call when **the name of our Lord Jesus Christ** is**glorified in** us. We understand that this means more than the **name of our Lord Jesus** as a word, but also as a representation of His character.

iv. We live worthy of His call when we are glorified **in Him**, when He alone is our source of glory and exaltation, and who we are in Jesus is more important than who we are in anything else.

This great work of living worthy of His calling can only happen according to the grace of God. It happens by His power, favor, and acceptance in work in us, moving along our will and cooperation.

**The Man of Lawlessness** Paul was helping Thessalonians how to process the persecution they are going through. Believers going through a season of persecution.

**2(TNAC) Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed,**

**either by a spirit or**

**a spoken word,**

**or a letter seeming to be from us,**

**to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.**

**3Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come,**

**unless the rebellion comes first,**

**and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,** (anomia) a word that describes willful opposition to God as well as a sinful condition. Consequences of this is destruction or doomed to destruction. Paul also describes this person as one who not only “opposes” God, but also exalts himself over everything that is in the dominion of God or is worshipped.

Daniel 11:36-37. ***36****“And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done.* ***37****He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all.*

**Prophecy Against the Prince of Tyre**

**Ezekiel 28***The word of the Lord came to me:* ***2****“Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord God:*

*“Because your heart is proud,*

*and you have said, ‘I am a god,*

*I sit in the seat of the gods,*

*in the heart of the seas,’*

*yet you are but a man, and no god,*

*though you make your heart like the heart of a god—*

1 John 2:18

Revelation 13, “the beast”

**THE ARROGANT KING**

**Daniel 11:36–45**

The identity of the king who does as he pleases in 11:36 is disputed. The two most popular views are (1) that this is a further description of the career of Antiochus Epiphanes; and (2) that he is the eschatological Antichrist who has yet to appear on the earth. The details here do not snugly fit what is known of the career of Antiochus. The view that this king is Antichrist is sheer imagination. A better interpretation is that this king represents that great king who ruled just prior to the birth of Christ, Herod the Great (40–4 b.c.).

**A. The Pride of the King (11:36–39)**

In some respects this king would repeat the indignation visited upon Israel by Antiochus Epiphanes. His arrogance would be manifested in five ways. (1) He would do as he pleased. (2) He would exalt himself over every god. (3) He would speak “monstrous things against the God of gods.” (4) He would reject the traditional religion of his fathers. (5) He would have no regard for “the desire of women.” This last phrase has been interpreted in various ways. Some think that the phrase means he would have no desire for women, i.e., he would be homosexual or perhaps celibate. Others think the reference is to his disregard of those desired by women, i.e., children in general, or the Messiah in particular (11:36f.). If the king here is Herod, the slaughter of the Bethlehem infants might be in view.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The king (Herod) would prosper “until the indignation is finished.” The period of wrath against national Israel which began with Antiochus Epiphanes would continue under the new dynasty. This king’s only god would be war, and he would build fortresses for his temples.[[35]](#footnote-35) With the support of his allies, the Romans, Herod undertook the most daring military adventures. He used bribery to raise up a host of fanatics loyal to his cause (11:38f.).

**4who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.**

These things must happen first (which maybe understood best as a single complex event but could be two sequential events) 1. The occurrence of “the rebellion.” 2. The revealing of the “man of lawlessness”

Verse 5 makes it clear that Paul had already warned them about this so they knew exactly what he was talking about.

Rebellion could be either political or religious rebellion probably leaning on religious but also could very well be both.

**5Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?**

**6And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.**

Paul first refers to this restraining influence in 2:6 as to katechon ( a neuter participle meaning “that which restrains”) and then in 2:7 as hokatechon (a masculine participle meaning “the one who restrains.”) What or who did Paul have in mind that he could refer to it in both impersonal and personal terms? Suggestions range widely, as is evident from the following list.

1. The Roman empire as personified in the emperor.
2. The principle of law and order (personified in v.7)
3. The Jewish state
4. Satan
5. A force and person hostile to God (taking the verb in the sense of “possess, occupy,” or “hold sway”)
6. God and his power;
7. The Holy Spirit;
8. the proclamation of the gospel by Christian missionaries, especially Paul himself
9. an angelic figure restraining evil until the gospel has been preached to all nations.

Mark 13:10 when Jesus foretells about the destruction of the temple and the end of the age.

**7For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.** Augustine says that the Thess. Knew what Paul was talking about but there is no way we can know for certain. So he leaves it at, I just don’t know.

**8And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.** Encouraging words for the saved.

**9The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,**

**10and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.** Those who do “love the truth” should not be deceived by the counterfeit miracles and wonders.

**11**(Consequences) **Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**

**2(DG) Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,**

Paul clearly wrote of the return of Jesus, but the wording here implies a difference between thecoming and ourgathering. This strongly suggests that there are essentially two comings of Jesus. One coming is *for* His church (as described clearly in [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.16-18&t=NKJV)), and the other coming is *with* His church, to judge a rebellious world.***16****For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* ***17****Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord*. [[36]](#footnote-36)

Hiebert shows how the grammar of the ancient Greek in [2 Thessalonians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+2.1&t=NKJV) shows this: “The government of the two nouns under one article makes it clear that one event, viewed under two complimentary aspects, is thought of.”

This is completely consistent with other passages of Scripture that indicate that there must be two aspects of Jesus’ second coming, and the aspects must be separated by some appreciable period of time.

· Different world conditions are described ([Matthew 24:37-42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.37-42&t=NKJV), [Matthew 24:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.21&t=NKJV), [Revelation 6:15-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+6.15-16&t=NKJV)). **36**“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. **37**For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. **38**For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,

· Different manners of Jesus’ return are described ([1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.16-17&t=NKJV), [Revelation 19:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11&t=NKJV), [14-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.14-15&t=NKJV), [21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.21&t=NKJV)).

· Different scenarios regarding the predictability of the date of Jesus’ return are established ([Matthew 24:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.36&t=NKJV), [Daniel 12:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+12.11&t=NKJV)). **36**“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

**2not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us,** Someone may have forged a letter in Paul’s name, claiming the Day of the Lord had already come. For this reason, Paul signs this letter with a distinguishing mark[[37]](#footnote-37)

**to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.** Apparently, a misunderstanding of Paul’s teaching (or an incorrect application of it) had caused the Thessalonians to be shakeninmind and troubled. Here Paul used a strong wording, speaking of both a *sudden jolt* (shakeninmind) and a continuing state of upset (troubled). Their fears centered on the idea that thedayof Christ had [already] come.

Some translations have *that the day of Christ is at hand*, such as the King James Version. But the translation in the New King James Version (and other modern translations) is preferred. The Thessalonians were not afraid that the day of Christ was *coming*, but that they were *in it*.

From this, it is obvious that the day of Christ had not been *completed*. Paul will go on to demonstrate that it also had not yet *dawned*, because the Thessalonians were afraid that they were in the Great Tribulation (the *day of the Lord*), and feared that they had missed the rapture. But Paul will demonstrate that they are not in the day of Christ; because if they were, then certain signs would be present.

It is important to notice that the Thessalonians would be shaken or troubled by the thought of being in the Great Tribulation *only* if they had been taught by Paul that they would *escape* that period through the rapture. Otherwise they would, in a sense, *welcome* the Great Tribulation as a necessary prelude to the Second Coming. But Paul had clearly taught them that they would escape God’s judgment on this earth during the period known as the *day of the Lord* or the dayof Christ ([1 Thessalonians 4:14-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.14-18&t=NKJV)).

**3Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come,** Paul will not describe events which must *precede* the rapture, but events that are *concrete evidence* of the Great Tribulation – theday of Christ. In this sense, one cannot be *certain* the day of Christ (the Great Tribulation) has come unless these signs are present.

**unless the rebellion comes first,** The ancient Greek wording for fallingaway indicates a *rebellion* or a *departure*. Bible scholars debate if it refers to an apostasy among those who once followed God, or a general worldwide rebellion. In fact, Paul may have both in mind, because there is evidence of each in the end times ([1 Timothy 4:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.1-3&t=NKJV), [2 Timothy 3:1-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.1-5&t=NKJV) and [4:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.3-4&t=NKJV)). Nevertheless, Paul’s point is clear: “You are worried that we are in the Great Tribulation and that you missed the rapture. But you can know that we are *not* in the Great Tribulation, because we have not yet seen the falling away that comes first.”

The idea of a great end-times apostasy also does not contradict the idea of a great end-times revival. Some Christians doubt the idea of great revival in the last days, or even welcome apostasy believing it signals the end. But just as the Book of Revelation describes great rejection of Jesus during the Great Tribulation ([Revelation 9:20-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+9.20-21&t=NKJV) and [17:2-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+17.2-6&t=NKJV)) *and* great acceptance of Him ([Revelation 7:9-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+7.9-14&t=NKJV)), the two can stand side-by-side.

**and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,** *destruction*, the complete loss of well-being. It is really the opposite of *salvation*. To call him the **son of** perdition means his character is marked by this destruction. Moffatt says the phrase “**son of perdition**” essentially means *the doomed one*.

**4who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.** The most traditional understanding of this **man of sin** is to say that he is not an individual, but a system or an office. Historically, Protestant interpreters have seen the **man of sin** to be the succession of popes. Calvin thought this way: “Paul, however, is not speaking of one individual, but of a kingdom that was to be seized by Satan for the purpose of setting up a seat of abomination in the midst of God’s temple. This we see accomplished in popery.”

Daniel described an individual person: *The prince who is to come* ([Daniel 9:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+9.26&t=NKJV)), the *king of fierce countenance* ([Daniel 8:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+8.23&t=NKJV)), the *willful king* ([Daniel 11:36-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+11.36-45&t=NKJV)).

Jesus described an individual person: The one who comes *in his own name* ([John 5:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.43&t=NKJV)).

The *man of sin* demands worship for himself that belongs to God only ([Luke 4:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+4.8&t=NKJV)). This demand for worship is also described in [Revelation 13:1-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+13.1-6&t=NKJV).

Understanding the strength and breadth of this statement shows us that saying that the Antichrist is the Pope is far too simplistic. He will sponsor a religion that does not tolerate the worship of anyone or anything except himself. The apostate Roman Catholic Church may be part of this end-times religion, but it will not encompass it.

The man of sin’s demand for worship will be so extreme, he will set himself up as God in the temple at Jerusalem, demanding this blasphemous worship from everyone ([Revelation 13:14-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+13.14-15&t=NKJV) and [Matthew 24:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.15&t=NKJV), [21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.21&t=NKJV), [29-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.29-31&t=NKJV)).

The temple of God: That this is a literal temple is clear from the text, and has been understood as such by even the earliest Christians. “But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom.” (Irenaeus, writing in the late second century)

The literal understanding of Paul’s words is also supported by the fact that when he wrote this letter, something similar to this *almost* happened in the recent past. “The recent attempt of Caligula to erect a statue of himself in the Temple at Jerusalem may have furnished a trait for Paul’s delineation of the future Deceiver; the fearful impiety of this outburst had sent a profound shock through Judaism, which would be felt by Jewish Christians as well.” (Moffatt)

The specific ancient Greek word for **temple** indicates *the most holy place* and not the temple as a whole. “It is not that he enters the temple precincts: he invades the most sacred place and there takes his seat. His action is itself a claim to deity.” (Morris) This is the ultimate blasphemy that results in certain judgment, the *abomination of desolation* spoken of by both Daniel and Jesus.

i. The prophet Daniel told us the Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews and bring sacrifice and offerings to an end; that the Antichrist will defile the temple by setting something abominable there ([Daniel 9:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+9.27&t=NKJV), [11:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+11.31&t=NKJV), and [12:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+12.11&t=NKJV)).

ii. Jesus said to look for an abomination standing in the holy place, which would be the pivotal sign that the season of God’s wrath was upon the earth ([Matthew 24:15-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.15-16&t=NKJV) and [24:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.21&t=NKJV)).

iii. “Any man may be satisfied that St. Paul alluded to Daniel’s description, because he has not only borrowed the same ideas, but has even adopted some of the phrases and expressions.” (Clarke)

**Showing himself that he is God**: The man of sin is truly an *Anti*-Christ. Satan has planned the career of the man of sin to mirror the ministry of Jesus.

· Both Jesus and the man of sin have a coming ([2 Thessalonians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+2.1&t=NKJV) and [2:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+2.9&t=NKJV)).

· Both Jesus and the man of sin are revealed ([2 Thessalonians 1:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+1.7&t=NKJV) and [2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+2.3&t=NKJV)).

· Both Jesus and the man of sin have a gospel ([2 Thessalonians 2:10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+2.10-11&t=NKJV)).

· Both Jesus and the man of sin say that they alone should be worshipped ([2 Thessalonians 2:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+2.4&t=NKJV)).

· Both Jesus and the man of sin have support for their claims by miraculous works ([2 Thessalonians 2:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+2.9&t=NKJV)).

i. Clearly, the man of sin is Satan’s parody of the true Messiah. Yet in the end, the *man of sin* can only show ***himself* that he is God**. The coming of Jesus and the judgment of God will make it clear that the man of sin is not God at all.

**5Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.** We should not think that the Holy Spirit would *leave* the earth during the Great Tribulation. He will be present on the earth during the Great Tribulation because many are saved, sealed, and serve God during this period ([Revelation 7:3-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+7.3-14&t=NKJV) and [14:1-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+14.1-5&t=NKJV)), and this can’t happen without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is taken out of the way, not removed.

**7For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.** This great principle of evil is already present in the world. It will be ultimately unveiled in the man of sin, but he does not introduce a *new* wickedness into the world, only an intensity of prior wickedness.

**Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. 8And then the lawless one will be revealed,** Paul states two certain facts about the man of sin, here called the lawless one. First, it is certain that the lawless one will be revealed when the Holy Spirit removes His restraint. Second, it is certain that the lawless one will be destroyed by the mere brightness of Jesus at His coming.

**whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. 9The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,** The Antichrist will come with **power**, with **signs** and with **lying wonders**. But all of this **is according to the working of Satan**, as described in [Revelation 13:13-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+13.13-17&t=NKJV).

i. If someone has spiritual **power**, **signs**, or **wonders**, those are not enough to prove they are from God. Satan can perform his own powerful works, either through deception or through his own resources of power.

**10and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing,** However, the deception can only take root in those who do not receive the love of the truth. These people are ready for the deception of the Antichrist, because they *want* a lie, and God will send them a strong delusion.

**because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**

God will send them: In the end, the Antichrist is only God’s messenger. God has judgment to bring, and He will send … a strong delusion through the Antichrist. God will not *force* this delusion on anyone, but those who do not receive the love of the truth will receive this strong delusion.

Specifically, God sends them *the* lie. This isn’t just *any*lie, but *the* lie, the lie that has enthralled the human race since Adam. This is the lie that God is not God, and that we are or can be gods.

As God gives rebellious man the lie he desires, it isn’t out of His generosity. Instead, it shows God’s judgment on those who reject the truth. As [Romans 1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+1&t=NKJV) points out, in judgment God may give a man up to the depravity of his heart, to his pleasure in unrighteousness.

**Stand Firm**

**13But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.** The two go together. Those who claim to be chosen but lack evidence of sanctification (separation *from* the world and *unto* God) are on shaky ground. We can’t see if a person is *chosen*, but we can see if they are *sanctified*.

**14To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.** The command to stand fast implies a *location*, and this tells us what Christians must stand fast upon. They must keep standing on God’s Word, delivered both by the authoritative word of the apostles (by word) and the letters of the apostles (our epistle).

**16Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, 17comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.**

**Pray for Us**

**3 Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, 2and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. 3But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. 4And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. 5May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.**

**Warning Against Idleness**

**6Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 10For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.**

**13As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. 14If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. 15Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.**

**Benediction**

**16Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.**

**17I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. 18The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.**

1 Timothy

**Introduction**

First Timothy is one of three pastoral letters (including 2 Timothy and Titus) that the aging apostle Paul sent to those who would continue his work. Timothy was, in every way, Paul’s spiritual son. Young but gifted, Timothy had been assigned to lead the church at Ephesus—a church needing order in worship as well as doctrinal correction, plagued as it was by false teachers. Paul’s letter, likely written about a.d. 62–66, counseled the young man on matters of church leadership—from proper worship, to qualifications for overseers (elders) and deacons, to advice on confronting false teaching and how to treat various individuals within a congregation. Paul charged Timothy to live a life beyond reproach, giving believers a standard to emulate. Timothy, late 20”s early 30”s

**Greeting**

**1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God**

Paul, in his self-description, emphasized his credentials (apostle) and his authority (by the commandment ofGod). He did this both as a *personal encouragement* to Timothy and so the letter could be used as a letter of reference before the Ephesian Christians.

**our Savior**:

At that very time, the title Savior was used to honor the Roman Emperor. People called, and were forced to call, Caesar Nero “savior.” Paul made the identity of the *real*Savior clear: God, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**and of Christ Jesus our hope,**

“Here it is to be noted that the *command* proceeds equally from God and Christ Jesus. This language could hardly have been used if St. Paul conceived of Christ Jesus as a creature.”

**2To Timothy,**

The Book of Acts tells us that Timothy came from Lystra, a city in the province of Galatia ([Acts 16:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.1-3&t=NKJV)). He was the son of a Greek father ([Acts 16:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.2&t=NKJV)) and a Jewish mother named Eunice ([2 Timothy 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+1.5&t=NKJV)). His mother and grandmother taught him the Scriptures from the time of Timothy’s youth ([2 Timothy 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+1.5&t=NKJV); [3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.15&t=NKJV)).

**my true child in the faith:**

Paul could consider Timothy a true son in the faith because he probably led him and his mother to faith in Jesus on Paul’s first missionary journey ([Acts 14:8-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+14.8-20&t=NKJV) and [16:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.1&t=NKJV)). This also expressed Paul’s confidence in Timothy’s integrity and faithfulness to the truth.

**Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.**

This is a familiar greeting Paul used in his letters to congregations. Here, he also applied it to an individual. God grants His **grace, mercy, and peace** not only to churches, but also to the *individuals* who make up the churches.

i. Yet there is a difference. When Paul wrote to churches, he commonly only greeted them with grace and peace. To both Timothy (also in [2 Timothy 1:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+1.2&t=NKJV)) and Titus ([Titus 1:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Titus+1.4&t=NKJV)) he added mercy to the greeting.

It seems that 1 Timothy was written by the Apostle Paul to Timothy sometime after his release from Roman imprisonment as described at the end of the Book of Acts and was written from Macedonia ([1 Timothy 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1.3&t=NKJV)).

Apparently, after his release (hoped for in [Philemon 1:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philemon+1.22&t=NKJV) and [Philippians 1:25-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+1.25-26&t=NKJV) and [2:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+2.24&t=NKJV)), Paul returned to the city of Ephesus. There he discovered that during his absence Ephesus had become a storm center of false teaching. This was a sad fulfillment of the prediction he made to the Ephesian elders in [Acts 20:29-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.29-30&t=NKJV).

Paul probably dealt with the false teachers personally, but soon found it necessary to leave for Macedonia. He then left Timothy in charge of affairs at Ephesus, as his own personal representative. He knew that Timothy had a difficult job to carry out, so he hoped that this letter would both equip and encourage him in the task.

**Warning Against False Teachers**

**3As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus**

Though Timothy had a difficult task Paul wanted him to remain in Ephesus and continue the work. Before Paul left for Macedonia, he urged Timothy to remain, even though the work was difficult.

Paul told Timothy to remain in Ephesus because it seemed that Timothy wanted to give up and run away. Most everyone in ministry deals with this at some time; for a few it is a constant affliction. There was probably both external pressure and internal pressure for him to leave.

ii. We can think of many reasons why Timothy might *not* want to remain in Ephesus:

· He might have missed Paul and wanted to be with his mentor.

· He might have been intimidated by following Paul’s ministry.

· He seems to have been somewhat timid or reserved by nature and was perhaps intimidated by the challenge.

· He might have been discouraged by the normal difficulties of ministry.

· He might have questioned his own calling.

· He might have been frustrated by the distracting and competing doctrines swirling around the Christians in Ephesus.

Despite all these reasons, there is no doubt that God – and the Apostle Paul – wanted Timothy to remain in Ephesus, and in the rest of [1 Timothy 1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1&t=NKJV), Paul gave Timothy at least six reasons why he should stay there and finish the ministry God gave him to do.

· Because they need the truth ([1 Timothy 1:3-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1.3-7&t=NKJV)).

· Because you minister in a hard place ([1 Timothy 1:8-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1.8-11&t=NKJV)).

· Because God uses unworthy people ([1 Timothy 1:12-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1.12-16&t=NKJV)).

· Because you serve a great God ([1 Timothy 1:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1.17&t=NKJV)).

· Because you are in a battle and cannot surrender ([1 Timothy 1:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1.18&t=NKJV)).

· Because not everyone else does ([1 Timothy 1:19-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1.19-20&t=NKJV)).

God will allow us to be in difficult situations. We must set our minds to meet the challenge, or we will surely give up. Many years ago a famous Arctic explorer put this ad in a London newspaper: “Men wanted for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.” Thousands of men responded to the appeal because they were willing to embrace a difficult job when called to do so by a great leader.

**so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine,**

Paul left Timothy with an important job to do, making it all the more important that he remainin Ephesus. The job was to make sure that correct doctrine was taught in Ephesus.

Paul left the Ephesian Christians with a particular set of teachings (which he had received from Jesus and the Old Testament). He was concerned that Timothy did everything he could to make sure the Ephesians *continue* in that doctrine. This was the first reason why it was important that Timothy remain in Ephesus.

Paul did this because doctrine is important to God and *should* be important to His people. Today, *what* one believes – that is, their doctrine – is remarkably *unimportant* to most people. This spirit of the modern age has also heavily influenced modern Christians. We live in a day where Pilate’s question *What is truth?* ([John 18:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+18.38&t=NKJV)) is answered, “Whatever it means to *you*.” Yet truth is important to God and should be to His people.

Paul’s concern was not primarily that Timothy himself would begin to teach wrong doctrine. His concern was that Timothy would allow others to spread these other doctrines. Timothy had to stand firm against difficult people and charge some that they teach no other doctrine. No wonder Timothy felt like leaving Ephesus.

In the ancient Greek, charge is a military word. It means “To give strict orders from a commanding officer” (Wiersbe). Timothy wasn’t to present the *option* of correct doctrine to these some in Ephesus. He was to *command* it like a military officer.

**4nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies,**

It seems that the great danger of these teachings (**fables and endless genealogies**) was that they were *silly distractions*. Timothy had to **remain in Ephesus** so that he could command others to ignore these speculative and silly distractions.

It wasn’t that there was an elaborate anti-Jesus theology rising in Ephesus. It was more that they tended to get carried away by emphasizing the wrong things. Paul wanted to prevent the corruption that came when people gave authority to fables and endless genealogies instead of true doctrine. *Silly distractions* were also dangerous, because they took the place of godlyedification which is in faith.

Perhaps the endless genealogies had to do with Gnostic-type theories of “emanations” from God. Perhaps they were connected with Jewish-type legalism that sought righteousness by virtue of one’s ancestry. Or perhaps he had in mind doctrinal systems based on mystic readings of Old Testament genealogies. Like Nyphiliums, aliens.

Ancient Jewish writings have been discovered which dig into the most complex genealogies, connecting them with wild speculations about spiritual mysteries. A consuming interest in these kinds of things will crowd out godly edification which is in faith.

**which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.**

The eventual fruit of these man-made diversions is evident. Though they may be popular and fascinating in the short term, in the long run they don’t strengthen God’s people in faith.

**5The aim of our charge**

The purpose of the law is found in its inward work upon the heart, not in mere outward observance. Without this understanding, it is easy to become shallow legalists who are only concerned with outward performance and appearance.

**is love that issues from a pure heart**

This suggests the idea that the problem in Ephesus was along Jewish-type legalistic lines. They misunderstood the commandment and the law.

**and a good conscience and a sincere faith.** If spending time in God’s word does not produce lovefrom a pure heart, a good conscience, or sincere faith in us, something is wrong. Legalism may make us twist God’s word, so that instead of showing **love** we are harsh and judgmental; instead of having a **good conscience** we always feel condemned knowing we don’t measure up; and instead of **sincere faith** we practically trust in our own ability to please God.

**6Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, 7desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.** This probably has in mind vain speculations about the Scriptures, which may have had analytical and entertainment value but were never meant to be our spiritual diet.

**8Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,**

The purpose of the law is to show us our sin, not to lead us to righteousness (as in [Galatians 3:24-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.24-25&t=NKJV)). It wasn’t made for the righteousperson (who walks by faith according to [Galatians 3:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.11&t=NKJV)) but for the lawless and insubordinate, to show them their sin.

**9understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient,**

**for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, 10the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,**

In Paul’s mind sound doctrine and right conduct are vitally connected. The sinful *actions* described in verses 9 and 10 are contrary to sound doctrine.

Many people will condemn anyone with standards — especially higher standards — as being a legalist. Having standards and keeping them does not make us legalists and obedience doesn’t make us legalists. We are legalists when we think what we do is what makes us right before God.

**11in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.** This is the church that Timothy was pastoring. It’s a hard place to serve God. The law exposes sin to point to a Savior**.** A need for the Gospel.

Tuesday 9.19.23

**Christ Jesus Came to Save Sinners**

**12I thank him who has given me strength,**

Paul was entrusted with the gospel because Jesus enabled Paul, and Paul thanked Jesus for that enabling. Paul was enabled for this ministry because he was counted… faithful for the ministry. Faithfulness made Paul ready to be used by God.

We often see our Christian service as a matter of volunteering. Yet as Christians, in regard to Jesus and His church, we are not volunteers. We are slaves. We are duty bound servants of Jesus, and faithfulness is expected of such servants.

**Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful,**

You don’t have to be smart to be faithful; you don’t have to be talented or gifted. Faithfulness is something very down-to-earth, and each of us can be faithful in the place God has placed us.

iii. Many people wait to be faithful. We tell ourselves, “I’ll be faithful when I’m in such and such a position.” That is foolish. We should be faithful right where we are at — our faithfulness is shown in the small things.

**appointing me to his service, 13though formerly**

Paul’s past did not disqualify him from serving God. God’s mercy and grace were enough to cover his past and enable him to serve God. We should never feel that our past makes us unable to be used by God.

i. With these words, Paul gave Timothy another reason to remain in Ephesus. It is likely that one reason Timothy wanted to leave Ephesus and his ministry there because he felt *unworthy* or *incapable* of the work. These words from Paul assured Timothy, “If there is anyone unworthy of disqualified, it should be me. Yet God found a way to use me, and He will use you also as you remain in Ephesus.”

**I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,**

Ignorance and unbelief never *excuse* our sin, but they do invite God’s mercy, because sin in ignorance and unbelief makes one *less* guilty than the believer who sins knowingly.

**14and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me**

It was not Paul’s ignorance that saved him; it was the exceeding abundant grace of God (God’s *unmerited* favor).

**with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.**

**15The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance,**

This unusual phrase introduces a statement of special importance. Paul used this phrase 5 times – all in the Pastoral Epistles.

**that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.**

Jesus came to save **sinners**, not those living under the illusion of their own righteousness. As Jesus taught, it is the sick who need a physician ([Mark 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+2.17&t=NKJV)).

Since Jesus came into the world to save **sinners**, this is the first necessary qualification for being a child of God – being a sinner. Sinners are not disqualified from coming to God, because Jesus came to save *them*.

We also see the great danger in taking the terms *sin* and *sinner* out of our vocabulary. Many preachers deliberately do this today, because they don’t want to offend anyone from the pulpit. But if Jesus came to save sinners, shouldn’t we identify who those sinners are? How else will they come to salvation?

Paul’s claim to be the **chief** of sinners was not an expression of a strange false humility. He genuinely felt his sins made him more accountable before God than others.

Paul felt – rightly so – that his sins were worse because he was responsible for the death, imprisonment, and suffering of Christians, whom he persecuted before his life was changed by Jesus ([Acts 8:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+8.3&t=NKJV); [9:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+9.1-2&t=NKJV), [1 Corinthians 15:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.9&t=NKJV), [Galatians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+1.13&t=NKJV), [Philippians 3:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.6&t=NKJV)).

Acts 26:11 **11**And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

**16But I received mercy for this reason,**

A man as bad as Paul has obtained mercy. This means that the door is open to others who are not as bad sinners as Paul was.

**that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.**

This explains another reason why God loves to save sinners. They become a **pattern** to those who are **going to believe on Him**. God wants others to see what He can do by working in us.

i. *This* truth – the doctrine – that changed Paul’s life was the truth he commanded Timothy to guard earlier in the chapter.

ii. **As a pattern**: Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, understood that his life, conversion, and service to God was in some way a **pattern** to other believers.

**17To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Paul could not think of how bad he was, and how great the salvation of God was, and how great the love of God was, without simply breaking into spontaneous praise.

This outburst of praise shows that Paul both *knew* God and that he *loved* God.

i. He knew God to be the King eternal, ruling and reigning in complete power and glory.

ii. He knew God to be immortal, existing before anything else existed, and being the Creator of all things.

iii. He knew God to be invisible, not completely knowable by us; we can’t completely figure out God, or know all His secrets.

iv. He knew God **alone is wise**, that He is God – and we are not. We think our plans and insights are so important, but only God really knows and understands all things.

c. **Be honor and glory forever and ever**: Knowing all this about God, Paul couldn’t stop praising Him. If we ever have trouble worshipping God, it is because we don’t know Him very well.

i. This description of God gave Timothy still another reason to remain in Ephesus. He could and should stay there when he considered the greatness of the God who he served. *This* great God was worthy of Timothy’s sacrifice and could empower his service in Ephesus.

**18This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you,** 1 Corinthians 14:29 weigh it. **29**Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Paul wanted Timothy to consider what the Holy Spirit had said to him through others in the past, and receive the courage to remain in Ephesus from those.

i. Apparently, God had spoken to Timothy through others through the gift of prophecy and the words were an encouragement for Timothy to stay strong in the difficulty right in front of him. It may have been a description of Timothy’s future ministry; it may have been a warning against being timid in his work for God. Whatever it was, God wanted Timothy to draw strength from it in his present difficulty.

**that by them you may wage the good warfare,**

The focus is not the prophetic word Timothy heard in the past. The focus is on battle right in front of him now, where he must **wage the good warfare** – that is, “fight the good fight” (KJV).

i. Timothy had a job in front of him, and it was going to be a battle. It wasn’t going to be easy, or comfortable, or carefree. He had to approach the job Paul left him to do in Ephesus as a soldier approaches battle.

ii. This gave Timothy still another reason to remain in Ephesus. He should sense a responsibility to stay when he felt like leaving because he was like a soldier in a battle, who could not desert his post.

**19holding faith and a good conscience.**

These are essential when battling for the Lord. They protect against the spiritual attacks of doubt and condemnation.

i. Timothy had to have the **faith** that God was in control, and would guide him as Timothy continued to seek him.

ii. He had to have **a good conscience**, because his enemies would be attacking him, and if Timothy had not conducted himself rightly, they would have good reason to attack. A **good conscience** isn’t just a conscience that approves us, but one that approves us because we’ve been doing what is right – it is connected with good conduct.

**By rejecting this,**

Some have **rejected** these weapons; specifically, Paul speaks of rejecting **the faith**; those who reject what Jesus and the apostles taught are headed for ruin (**shipwreck**).

**some have made shipwreck of their faith, 20among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander,**

We know nothing of Hymenaeus and Alexander other than what Paul said of them here. Paul apparently disciplined them for their disobedience to God in heresy, in conduct, or in both.

**whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.**

From other New Testament passages we can surmise that he did this by putting them outside the church, into the world, which is the devil’s domain. The punishment was a removal of protection, not an infliction of evil. 1 Corinthians 5:4-5

i. The Lord protects us from many attacks from Satan ([Job 1:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job+1.10&t=NKJV); [Luke 22:31-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+22.31-32&t=NKJV)), and much of this protection comes to us in what we receive as we gather together as Christians.

ii. In this, Paul gave Timothy one more reason to remain in Ephesus. He should do it because *not everyone else does*. We can’t simply act as if every Christian does what God wants them to and stays faithful to the gospel. The fact that some do not remain faithful to the end should give us more incentive to not give up.

**Acts 19:10**This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. **20**So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

**2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people**, virtually all Church Gathering have done this even now.2000 years

i. **Supplication** is simply *asking* for something. Prayer should never be all asking, but it *should* ask in bold confidence from God’s Word.

ii. **Prayers** is a broad word, referring to all communication with the Lord.

iii. **Intercessions** refer to the requests we make on behalf of others. As we pray, there should be time when the needs of others find a place in our prayer before God’s throne.

iv. **Giving of thanks** is an essential part of our walk with God. Those who lack a basic sense of gratitude in their lives lack a basic Christian virtue.

All people: This tells us *whom* we are to pray for with these various means of prayer. The idea is that **all men** need prayer. You have never met someone that you cannot or should not pray for.

i. Most Christians find it easy to pray for their family, friends, and loved ones, but it should not end there. We should also pray for our *enemies* and for those with whom we have conflict. We should pray for those who annoy us, and for those who seem to be against us. Each of these fall into the category of **all men**.

ii. To pray for **all men** also means to pray *evangelistically*. We should pray for our friends who need to know Jesus, for our coworkers, and for others we have regular contact with.

iii. To pray for **all men** also means to pray for your pastors, to pray for your church, and to pray for other ministries you know and love.

**2for kings and all who are in high positions,**

Early Christians were often accused of undermining the state because they claimed a higher Lord other than Caesar. Yet they would point out that they supported the state by being good citizens and by praying *for* the emperor, not *to* him.

In the previous verse Paul said that we should *give thanks* for all men, and here he connects the thought with those who are in authority over us. We should give thanks for those who are in authority, because God has ordained government in society to keep order ([Romans 13:1-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+13.1-7&t=NKJV)).

*Romans 13 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer. 5Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.*

**that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.**

We should pray for a government and rulers that would simply leave us alone and let us live as Christians.

i. Christians are to look for no special favors from the government. Our goal is a level playing field, unrestricted by state intervention.

ii. At the time Paul wrote this, Christianity was not yet an illegal religion in the Roman Empire and it was still considered a branch of Judaism. It was even more reasonable to believe that the Roman government might just leave Christians alone to live their faith.

**3This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** Prayer for those in authority should always have an evangelical purpose. Our real goal is that they would come under the authority of Jesus, and make decisions allowing the gospel to have free course and be glorified.

On a human level, we can certainly say that God **desires all men to be saved**. There is no one in such high authority that they don’t need salvation in Jesus.

i. However, from a divine perspective, we understand there is a sense in which we can *not* say that God **desires all men to be saved** – otherwise, either all men would automatically *be saved*, or God would not have left an element of human response in the gospel.

ii. God’s desire for all men to be saved is conditioned by His desire to have a genuine response from human beings. He won’t fulfill His desire to save all men at the expense of making men robots that worship Him from simply being programmed to do so.

Because this is true (as seen from a human perspective), therefore the gospel must be presented to all without reservation. Any idea of limiting evangelism to the elect is absurd.

Salvation is clearly associated with coming **to the knowledge of the truth**. One cannot be saved apart from at least some understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done to save us.

**5For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,** This statement of Paul simply echoes what Jesus said in [John 14:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+14.6&t=NKJV): *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

ii. It is also simply logical. If Jesus was at least a good and honest man, then He told the truth when He said that He was the only way to God. If He did not tell the truth at this important point, then it is difficult to regard Him as even a good or honest man, much less a prophet from God. If He was wrong then He was either a liar or a lunatic.

iii. In the modern world most people think that any road leads to God, *if followed sincerely* or *with a good heart*. The Bible argues against this idea.

· The Pharisee and the tax collector each came to God sincerely, but one was accepted, and one was not ([Luke 18:9-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+18.9-14&t=NKJV)).

· The rich young ruler came to Jesus sincerely, but was rejected because he did not give up everything to follow Jesus ([Luke 18:18-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+18.18-23&t=NKJV)).

· In [Leviticus 10:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+10.1-3&t=NKJV), the story of Nadab and Abihu – and God’s judgment upon them – makes it clear that we cannot come to God any way we please, and that sincerity is not enough.

· [Proverbs 14:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+14.12&t=NKJV) is instructive: *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

iv. Many people think that God would be unfair or narrow minded to have only one way to salvation; but the thought needs to be turned over. To say that God is unfair for this, one would have to look at Jesus dying on the cross – the spotless Son of God, came from heaven and lived humbly and died in horrific agony, both physical and spiritual – to look at Jesus on the cross and say, “Thanks God; I appreciate the gesture, but that *isn’t enough*. You’re going to have to do a little more than that, because that is only *one way* and if You are fair You will make *several ways*.”

This reminds us that Jesus is still human, even as He is enthroned in heaven right now. His humanity was not merely a temporary phase. When the Eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, added humanity to His deity, He added it forever – not only for 33 years.

i. Jesus is still fully God and fully man, but His humanity is glorified and resurrected. It is the pattern of the humanity that we will experience in heaven.

**6who gave himself**  Jesus gave **Himself**. You can give your time without giving yourself. You can give your money without giving yourself. You can give your opinion without giving yourself. You can even give your life without giving yourself. Jesus wants us to give ourselves, just as He **gave Himself**.

**as a ransom for all,** Jesus gave Himself as a *hostage*, as a payment for our sins. He put Himself in our place and received the punishment and wrath from God the Father that we deserved. This is the basic message of the gospel.

There is enough in the work of Jesus on the cross for everyone. No one will be turned away because Jesus ran out of love or forgiveness at the cross for them.

**which is the testimony given at the proper time. 7For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying),** This was the message Paul preached. The message was of salvation only through Jesus, and Jesus crucified (as in [1 Corinthians 2:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.1-2&t=NKJV)).**a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.** Paul began his ministry with an equal emphasis to both Jew and Gentile ([Acts 13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+13&t=NKJV)), but because of continued rejection by Jews, Paul began to emphasize his ministry to the Gentiles.

**8I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;** This has the idea of “In every church,” and not of “In every place.” Paul’s focus is on what the church does when it comes together for meetings. Psalm 63:2-4

i. The idea that we should pray constantly and that prayer should be a normal part of our lives wherever we go is good and valid; but it is not what Paul means here.

ii. White on **everywhere**: “The directions are to apply to every Church without exception; no allowance is to be made for the conditions peculiar to any locality.”

Makes it clear Paul assumed **men** would take the lead at meetings of the congregation. Since the lifting up of hands was a common posture of prayer in ancient cultures, this text speaks of men leading public prayer – men representing the congregation before God’s throne.

Hands that are lifted up must be **holy**– hands that are set apart unto God, and not given over to evil.

Such prayers must be **without wrath** (praying “angry” prayers) and without **doubting** (praying without faith). When we pray angry, or pray without faith, we can do more bad than good – especially when the prayer is public.

**9likewise also** The word **also** refers back to the statement *that the men pray everywhere* in [1 Timothy 2:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+2.8&t=NKJV). Paul thought the principle of [1 Timothy 2:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+2.8&t=NKJV) should apply in various congregations, and so should the principle in [1 Timothy 2:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+2.9&t=NKJV).

**that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control,** This is how Christian women are supposed to dress, especially at their Christian meetings. The words **propriety and moderation** help explain what **modest apparel** is.

i. **Propriety** asks, “Is it appropriate for the occasion? Is it over-dressed or under-dressed? Is it going to call inappropriate attention to myself?” **Moderation** asks, “Is it moderate? Is it just too much – or far too little?” **Moderation** looks for a middle ground.

ii. The **braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing** Paul mentions were adornments that went against the principles of **propriety** and **moderation** in that culture.

iii. How you dress reflects your heart. If a man dresses in a casual manner, it says something about his attitude. Likewise, if a woman dresses in an immodest manner, it says something about her heart.

**not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, 10but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.** The most important adornment is **good works**. If a woman is dressed in propriety and moderation, with good works, she is perfectly dressed. **Good works** make a woman more beautiful than good jewelry.

**11Let a woman learn quietly**This unfortunate translation has led some to believe that it is forbidden for women to even speak in church meetings. Paul uses the same word translated **silence** in [1 Timothy 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+2.2&t=NKJV), and it is translated *peaceable* there. The idea is *without contention* instead of total silence.

i. In other places in the New Testament, even in the writings of Paul, women are specifically mentioned as praying and speaking in the church ([1 Corinthians 11:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+11.5&t=NKJV)). To **learn in silence** has the idea of women receiving the teaching of the men God has chosen to lead in the church, with **submission** instead of *contention*.

ii. **Submission** is the principle; to **learn in silence** describes the application of the principle.

iii. Some have said the reason for this is because in these ancient cultures (as well as some present-day cultures), men and women sat in separate sections. The thought is that women interrupted the church service by shouting questions and comments to their husbands during the service. Clarke expresses this idea: “It was lawful for *men* in public assemblies to ask questions, or even interrupt the speaker when there was any matter in his speech which they did not understand; but this liberty was not granted to *women*.”

**with all submissiveness.** The word for **submission** here literally means, “To be under in rank.” It has to do with respecting an acknowledged order of authority. It certainly does not mean that men are more spiritual than women or that women are inferior to men.

**12I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man;** Paul’s meaning seems clear. Women are not to have the role of teaching authority in the church. To be *under authority* is the principle; *not teaching* is the application.

i. Paul is saying that the church should not recognize women as those having authority in the church regarding matters of doctrine and Scriptural interpretation.

ii. Not all speaking or teaching by a woman is *necessarily* a violation of God’s order of authority in the church. Whatever speaking or teaching is done by a woman must be done in submission to the men God has appointed to lead the church.

iii. [1 Corinthians 11:1-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+11.1-12&t=NKJV) emphasizes the same principle. Women are to always act *under authority* in the congregation, demonstrated in Corinthian culture by the wearing of a head covering. Therefore a woman in the Corinthian church could only pray or prophesy if she demonstrated that she was under the leadership of the church, and she demonstrated this by wearing a head covering and by acting consistently with that principle.

**12I do not permit** The strength of Paul’s wording here makes it challenging to obey this command in today’s society. Since the 1970’s, our culture has rejected the idea that there may be different roles for men and women in the home, in the professional world, or in the church. In this text (among others), the Holy Spirit clearly says there *is* a difference in roles.

i. But the cultural challenge must be seen in its true context – not just a struggle between men and women, but as a struggle with the issue of authority in general. Since the 1960’s, there has been a massive change in the way we see and accept authority.

· Citizens do not have the same respect for government’s authority.

· Students do not have the same respect for teacher’s authority.

· Women do not have the same respect for men’s authority.

· Children do not have the same respect for parental authority.

· Employees do not have the same respect for their employer’s authority.

· People do not have the same respect for the police’s authority.

· Christians no longer have the same respect for church authority.

ii. There are not many who would say that these changes have been *good*. Generally, people do not feel safer and there is less confidence in the culture. Television and other entertainment gets worse and worse. In fact, our society is presently in, and rushing towards, complete anarchy – the state where no authority is accepted, and the only thing that matters is what one *wants* to do.

iii. It is fair to describe our present moral state as one of anarchy. There is no moral authority in our culture. When it comes to morality, the only thing that matters is what one wants to do. And in a civil sense, many neighborhoods in our nation are given over to anarchy. The government’s authority is not accepted in gang-infested portions of our cities. The only thing that matters is what one *wants* to do.

iv. We must see the broader attack on authority as a direct Satanic strategy to destroy our society and millions of individual lives. He is accomplishing this with two main attacks. First, the *corruption* of authority; second, the *rejection* of authority.

v. This idea of authority and submission to authority are so important to God that they are part of His very being. The First Person of the Holy Trinity is called the *Father*; the Second Person of the Holy Trinity is called the *Son*. Inherent in those titles is a relationship of authority and submission to authority. The Father exercises authority over the Son, and the Son submits to the Father’s authority – and this is in the *very nature and being* of God. Our failure to exercise Biblical authority, and our failure to submit to Biblical authority, isn’t just wrong and sad – it sins against the very nature of God. [1 Samuel 15:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Samuel+15.23&t=NKJV) speaks to this same principle: *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft*.

**I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man**: Paul’s focus here is the public worship of the church. God has established a clear chain of authority in both the home and in the church, and in those spheres, God has ordained that men are the “head” – that is, that they have the place of authority and responsibility.

i. Our culture, having rejected the idea of a difference in *role* between men and women, now rejects the idea of *any difference* between men and women. The driving trends in our culture point towards men who are more like women, and women who are more like men. Styles, clothes, perfumes, and all the rest promote this thought.

ii. The Bible is just as specific that there is no *general* submission of women unto men commanded in society; only in the spheres of the home and in the church. God has not commanded in His word that men have exclusive authority in the areas of politics, business, education, and so on.

iii. It also does not mean that *every* woman in the church is under the authority of *every* man in the church. Instead it means that those who lead the church – pastors and ruling elders – must be men, and the women (and others) must respect their authority.

iv. The failure of men to lead in the home and in the church, and to lead in the way Jesus would lead, has been a chief cause of the rejection of male authority – and is inexcusable.

v. Some feel this recognition and submission to authority is an unbearable burden. They feel that it means, “I have to say that I am inferior, that I am nothing, and I have to recognize this other person as being superior.” Yet inferiority or superiority has nothing to do with this. We remember the relationship between God the Father and God the Son – they are completely equal in their being, but have different roles when it comes to authority.

vi. Some may say that the church cannot work (or cannot work *well*) unless we go along with the times and put women into positions of spiritual and doctrinal authority in the church. From the standpoint of what works in our culture, they may be right. Yet from the standpoint of pleasing God by doing what He says in His word, they are wrong.

**rather, she is to remain quiet. 13For Adam was formed first,** The first reason for male authority in the church is order of creation. Adam (man) was created first, and given original authority on earth.

i. The first command God gave to the human race is found in [Genesis 2:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.16-17&t=NKJV): *Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die*. This command was not given to woman at all. At the time that command was given, Eve was not yet created from Adam.

ii. Therefore, Adam received his command and his authority from God, and Eve received her command and authority from Adam.

**then Eve; 14and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. The woman being deceived**: The second reason is the difference in the sin of Adam and Eve, as connected to their difference in authority.

i. Both Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, and Eve clearly sinned first. Yet, the Bible never blames Eve for the fall of the human race, but always blames Adam (*through one man sin entered the world*, [Romans 5:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+5.12&t=NKJV)). Adam is responsible because of there was a difference of authority. Adam had an authority Eve did not have; therefore he also had a *responsibility* Eve did not have. Adam failed in his responsibility in a far more significant way than Eve did.

ii. As well, Eve was **deceived**, and Adam **was not deceived**. Eve was tricked; but Adam sinned knowing exactly what he was doing when he rebelled. This means that though Adam’s sin was worse, Eve’s ability to be more readily deceived made her more dangerous in a place of authority. “Eve’s reasoning faculty was at once overcome by the allegation of jealousy felt by God, an allegation plausible to a nature swayed by emotion rather than by reflection.” (White)

iii. Generally speaking, it may be observed that women seem to be more spiritually sensitive than men – but this can be true for good or evil.

**15Yet she will be saved through childbearing.** Many people regard this as one of the most difficult passages in the whole Bible. On the surface, it could be taken to mean that if a woman continues in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control, that God will bless her with survival in childbirth – which was no small promise in the ancient world.

i. Yet this interpretation leaves many difficult questions. Is this an absolute promise? What about godly women who have died in childbirth? What about sinful women who have survived childbirth? Doesn’t this seem like just a reward for good works, and not according to God’s grace and mercy?

**—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.** Some approach this passage saying **saved** refers to gaining eternal life. Yet this interpretation is even more difficult. Are women saved eternally by giving birth to children – but only if they continue with godly virtues? What about women who *can’t* have children? Are they denied salvation?

c. **She will be saved in childbearing**: Some say that Paul “Has mostly in mind that child-bearing, not public teaching, is the peculiar function of woman, with a glory and dignity all its own.” (Robinson) The idea is that one should let the men teach in church and let the women have the babies.

d. **She will be saved in childbearing**: A better way to approach this passage is based on the grammar in the original Greek language. In the original, it says *she will be saved in the childbirth*. This has the sense, “Even though women were deceived, and fell into transgression starting with Eve, women can be saved by the Messiah – whom a woman brought into the world.”

i. Probably, the idea here is that even though the “woman race” did something bad in the garden by being deceived and falling into transgression, the “woman race” also did something far greater, in being used by God to bring the saving Messiah into the world.

ii. The summary is this: Don’t blame women for the fall of the human race; the Bible doesn’t. Instead, thank women for bringing the Messiah to us.

e. **Faith, love, and holiness, with self-control**: Most of all, we should note these positives. They are all qualities God wants to be evident in women, and that women have effectively nurtured in their children through generations.

**Qualifications for Overseers.** Paul writing to Timothy in previous chapters of things relevant to church life.

Paul has just written that women are not to hold positions of spiritual or doctrinal authority over congregations, but he did not want to leave the impression that just *any* man is qualified. No man is qualified to be a spiritual leader in the church just because of his gender.

Paul provides a list of qualifications for the individual desiring to serve the church as an overseer or elder. These qualifications emphasize the character of the leader, not the duties to be performed. Paul’s emphasis on the untarnished reputation of the potential leader suggests a concern for the public perception of the church; he exhorts communities of faith to avoid appointing a leader whose respectability in the community is (or could be) questioned.

Paul’s teachings on leadership roles, submission in households, the roles of women, and the qualifications for church leaders all reveal a pattern of accommodation to cultural norms—all for the sake of spreading the gospel (Eph 5:22–6:9; Col 3:18–4:1; 1 Tim 2:9–15; 3:1–13). Yet Paul still subtly undermines traditional understandings of those norms with these teachings. In many ways, Paul’s views are progressive in his cultural context: They require people in leadership to adhere to a higher standard of moral responsibility than was typical for the time. Examples of this appear in his teachings that husbands should love their wives (see note on Eph 5:25) and that masters should treat their slaves fairly (see note on Col 4:1).

However, Paul does not advocate a complete abandonment of the traditional leadership hierarchy of his day, since attempting to overthrow all cultural norms would have hindered the church’s ability to spread the gospel in Graeco-Roman society. Appointing women as overseers or elders would have created a potentially divisive culture shock (see note on 1 Tim 2:11–15). While having women serve in ministry was countercultural, having them occupy positions of upper-level leadership would have ostracized nearly every male of the first century ad. Paul did not want to force full Christian equality into every level of society at the expense of creating a barrier to men’s salvation (compare Rom 10:12; 1 Cor 9:20–23; 12:13; Gal 3:28).[[39]](#footnote-39)

**3 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer,** The office Paul described is that of **bishop**. Our religious culture has given us a particular idea of what a **bishop** is; but the word **bishop** in New Testament Greek [*episkopos*] literally means “over” (*epi*) “watcher” (*skopos*) – an *overseer*.

In [Acts 20:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.17&t=NKJV), we learn there were several *bishops* – that is, overseers – in one church in one city. Undoubtedly, these were men who had oversight over the many house-churches that met throughout the city.***17****Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.[[40]](#footnote-40)*

Based on what **bishop** means, a bishop is someone with *oversight* in the church, a leader. Such a person may also sometimes be called an *elder* (*presbuteros*) or a *pastor* (*poimen*, which means “shepherd”), as in [Acts 20:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.17&t=NKJV) and [20:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.28&t=NKJV).***28****Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.[[41]](#footnote-41)*

**he desires a noble task.** The idea isn’t, “Good for you, you want to have a place of spiritual leadership,” even though that can be a godly desire. The idea is more like this: “This is a good, noble, honorable work. Timothy, you need to look for good, noble, honorable men.”

Spiritual leadership in the church isn’t all about titles and honor and glory; it’s about **work**. Jesus said: *If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all* ([Mark 9:35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+9.35&t=NKJV)).

**2Therefore an overseer must** God has specific *qualifications* for leaders in the church. Leaders are not to be chosen at random, nor just because they volunteer, nor because they aspire to the position, nor even because they are “natural leaders.” Instead they should be chosen primarily on how they match the qualifications listed here.

However, this is not a rigid list which demands *perfection* in all areas; they are both goals to reach for and general criteria for selection. When looking for church leaders, one should look at this list and ask:

· Does the man in question desire all these things with his whole heart?

· Does that desire show itself in his life?

· Are there others available who better fulfill the requirements of this list?

As well, these qualifications are valuable for every person, and not only those who aspire to leadership. They are clear indicators of godly character and spiritual maturity and they can give a true measure of a man.

**be above reproach,** The Greek word used here, *anepilēmptos*, means to be above criticism. Paul requires that leaders maintain a positive reputation inside and outside the community of believers. If not, their actions may become the subject of criticism and discredit the gospel message (compare 1 Tim 3:2–7). Paul also used this word with respect to the conduct of widows (5:7) and Timothy (6:14).[[42]](#footnote-42)

This word literally means, “Nothing to take hold upon.” There must be nothing in his life that others can take hold of and attack the church.

This is a broad term for a man who lives a righteous life that can be *seen* as righteous. No one can stand up and rightfully accuse the man of grievous sin. In [1 Timothy 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+3.10&t=NKJV), in speaking about deacons, Paul used the phrase *being found blameless*. This implies being *blameless* is demonstrated by a track record of behavior.

**the husband of one wife,** The idea here is of “A one-woman man.” It is not that a leader *must* be married (if so, then both Jesus and Paul could not be spiritual leaders in our churches). Nor is the idea that leader could never remarry if his wife had passed away or was Biblically divorced. The idea is that his love and affection and heart is given to **one** woman, and that being his lawful and wedded wife. This means that the Biblical leader is not a playboy, an adulterer, a flirt, and does not show romantic or sexual interest in other women, including the depictions or images of women in pornography.

The Greek text here, which rendered literally is “the man of one woman,” may mean that an overseer must be either a married man, abstain from polygamy and sexual immorality; avoid remarriage, or be faithful to his wife. Since polygamy was already considered immoral in Graeco-Roman society, it is unlikely that Paul specifically prohibits it here. Also, Paul elsewhere promotes remaining single (1 Cor 7:1) and supports remarriage (1 Cor 7:39). Therefore, it is most likely that Paul is promoting fidelity in the marriage relationship.[[43]](#footnote-43)

**sober-minded,** The idea is of someone who is *not given to extremes*. They are reliable and trustworthy, and you don’t have to worry about wide swings of vision, mood, or action.

**self-controlled,** The Stoics considered self-control one of the four principal virtues by which to counteract promiscuous behavior. In the Pastoral Letters (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus), those with self-control resist ungodliness (Titus 2:12) in proper anticipation of Christ’s return (1 Pet 4:7). Paul lists self-control as a required characteristic of overseers (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8), older men (Titus 2:2), younger men (Titus 2:6), and women (Titus 2:5). While the Cretans were familiar with this notion, Paul makes clear that this virtue is rooted not in human philosophy or tradition, but in the grace of God (Titus 2:11–12).[[44]](#footnote-44)

**respectable, hospitable, able to teach,** This means they are skilled enough in the Bible to teach, either in a public or one-on-one setting. Overseers who meet this qualification can refute false teachers and protect the church community from unsound doctrine.[[45]](#footnote-45)

**3not a drunkard,** The idea is of not being addicted to wine or intoxicating drink. This verse, in itself, does not *prohibit* godly leadership from drinking alcoholic beverages, but it clearly discourages it.

**not violent but gentle,** This is a man who is not given to violence either publicly nor privately; a man who can let God fight his cause.

**not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.** This is a more encompassing thought than merely *greedy for money*. The **covetous** man is never satisfied with anything, always demanding something more or different. A man who is constantly *dissatisfied* is not fit for leadership among God’s people.

**4He must manage his own household well,** The godly leader demonstrates his leadership ability first in his own home; Paul recognized that it is in the home where our Christianity is first demonstrated.It is true that a child may rebel from even a good home; but is the rebellion *because* of the parents or *in spite* of their job as parents? This is the question that must be asked.

**with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? 6He must not be a recent convert,** New converts should not be given leadership too quickly. The leader should be well past the **novice** stage in their spiritual development. literally “newly planted.” When someone first comes to Jesus, it isn’t good to put them into a place of leadership until they have been allowed to grow long enough to put down some deep roots.

**or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace,** These characteristics must be evident to all, even unbelievers to see. The potential leader must be a good Christian *outside* the walls of the church.

**into a snare of the devil.**

**Qualifications for Deacons**The list of qualifications for deacons also emphasizes personal character. The qualities of character required for both overseers and deacons are essentially the same. A unique aspect of the discussion of deacons is that qualifications for women participating in the ministry appear in v. 11. The qualities for women similarly emphasize reputation and character.[[46]](#footnote-46)

**8Deacons likewise** An example of the appointment of deacons is in [Acts 6:1-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+6.1-6&t=NKJV), where the apostles saw the need to distribute the daily assistance to the widows among the church yet did not have the time to distribute the aid themselves. They chose men to act essentially as deacons in that church. *Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.* ***2****And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.* ***3****Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.* ***4****But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”* ***5****And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.* ***6****These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.*

**must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.** Refers to the gospel message about Jesus Christ as received by the apostles. In other passages, Paul uses similar language to refer to Christ’s work of bringing both Jews and Gentiles into one people of God (e.g., Eph 3:6–9).[[47]](#footnote-47)

**10And let them also be tested first;** A man *demonstrates* his fitness for office in the church by his conduct. Deacons and bishops are more *recognized* than *appointed*.

**then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.**

**The Mystery of Godliness**

**14I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, 15if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God,** In the ancient Greek language, “church” was a non-religious word for a group of people called together for a purpose. The livingGod has called His people together for His purpose.

**a pillar and buttress of the truth.** The pillar and ground (foundation) of the church is **truth**. Tragically, many churches today don’t value the truth as they should and are therefore left weak pillars and shaky ground.

**16Great indeed, we confess,** beyond question(NASB), without controversy(KJV) **is the mystery of godliness:**

**He was manifested in the flesh,**

**vindicated by the Spirit,** We can say that Jesus was justified by the Spirit not in the sense that He was once sinful but made righteous, but in the sense that He was declared to be, by the Holy Spirit, what He always was – completely justified before the Father.

This declaration was made at His baptism ([Matthew 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.16&t=NKJV)), and at His resurrection ([1 Peter 3:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+3.18&t=NKJV); [Acts 2:32-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+2.32-33&t=NKJV)).

**Matt 3:16**And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; **17**and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

**1 Peter 3:18**For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

**Acts 2:32**This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. **33**Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.[[48]](#footnote-48)

**seen by angels,** The ministry of Jesus, both on earth and through the Church, is of great interest to angelic beings. There were many instances when Jesus was seen by angels ([Mark 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+1.13&t=NKJV); [Luke 22:41-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+22.41-43&t=NKJV)), and especially at the resurrection ([Matthew 28:2-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+28.2-7&t=NKJV)).

**proclaimed among the nations,** Paul himself did his best to *fulfill* these statements*.* He was busy preaching Jesus among the Gentiles and bringing the world to belief.

**believed on in the world,**

**taken up in glory.** Jesus ascended into heaven in a resurrection body; yet it was a body that still retained the marks of His great work of love for us. It still had the nail prints in His hands and feet, the wound in his side, all marks of His suffering on our behalf ([John 20:24-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+20.24-29&t=NKJV)).***24****Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.* ***25****So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”*

***26****Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”* ***27****Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”* ***28****Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”* ***29****Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” [[49]](#footnote-49)*

Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of these descriptions of Christian character. We trust that Jesus will transform our life according to the same character, as we put our focus on Him. We sometimes want *religion* to build this character in us; but truly, *relationship* with Jesus is what really does it.

This reminds us of Jesus’ ascension ([Luke 24:51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.51&t=NKJV)), His finished work on our behalf ([Hebrews 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+1.3&t=NKJV)), and His present intercession for us ([1 John 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+2.1&t=NKJV)).

**Luke 24:51** *While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven*.

**Hebrews 1:3**. *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*

**1 John 2:1** *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* ***2****He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.* ***3****And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.* ***4****Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,* ***5****but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him:* ***6****whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*

**Some Will Depart from the Faith**

**4 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, 3who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.**

**A Good Servant of Christ Jesus**

**6If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. 7Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 9The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. 10For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.**

**11Command and teach these things. 12Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.**

**Instructions for the Church**

**5 Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, 2older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.**

**3Honor widows who are truly widows. 4But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. 5She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, 6but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. 7Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. 8But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

**9Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, 10and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work. 11But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry 12and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. 13Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. 14So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. 15For some have already strayed after Satan. 16If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.**

**17Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 18For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.” 19Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 20As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. 21In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. 22Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure. 23(No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.) 24The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. 25So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.**

**6 Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. 2Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.**

**False Teachers and True Contentment**

**Teach and urge these things. 3If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, 4he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. 6But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 9But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.**

**Fight the Good Fight of Faith**

**11But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. 12Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, 14to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.**

**17As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 18They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.**

**20O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” 21for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.**

**Grace be with you.**

2 Timothy

**Introduction**

Paul wrote this letter as he awaited execution. Despite all that Paul was facing—death, the end of his ministry, abandonment by most of his friends for fear of persecution—he faithfully directed his spiritual son Timothy to the hope that is in Christ. As he exhorted Timothy to boldness, endurance, and faithfulness in the face of false teaching, Paul showed his customary concern for sound doctrine. Scripture, said Paul, is “breathed out by God” and is sufficient in all things pertaining to the faith and practice of Christians (3:16–17). Older believers, therefore, should be eager to pass on their knowledge of Scripture to those who are younger in the faith (2:2). Paul probably wrote from Rome, a.d. 67 or 68.

**Greeting**

**1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,**

**2To Timothy, my beloved child:**

**Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You**

**3I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. 6For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.**

**8Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 11for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, 12which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. 13Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.**

**15You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, 17but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me— 18may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day!—and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.**

**A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus**

**2 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. 3Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. 5An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. 7Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.**

**8Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, 9for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! 10Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11The saying is trustworthy, for:**

**If we have died with him, we will also live with him;**

**12 if we endure, we will also reign with him;**

**if we deny him, he also will deny us;**

**13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful—**

**for he cannot deny himself.**

**A Worker Approved by God**

**14Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. 15Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. 16But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, 17and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. 19But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.”**

**20Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. 21Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.**

**22So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. 24And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.**

**Godlessness in the Last Days**

**3 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 6For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 8Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. 9But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.**

**All Scripture Is Breathed Out by God**

**10You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**

**Preach the Word**

**4 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**

**6For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.**

**Personal Instructions**

**9Do your best to come to me soon. 10For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. 12Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. 14Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. 16At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! 17But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. 18The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

**Final Greetings**

**19Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. 21Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.**

**22The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.**

Titus

**Introduction**

This pastoral letter from Paul to Titus was intended to offer encouragement and wisdom as Titus endured ongoing opposition from the ungodly and from legalists within his congregations. Paul instructed Titus to complete his assigned job of establishing overseers (elders) for the churches under his care. He described what sort of people these leaders should be, and how all believers should live in relation to each other as well as in their interactions with nonbelievers. Proper Christian behavior is based on the fact that “the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,” and therefore those who believe in Christ are to “live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives” as they await his return (2:11–13). Paul probably wrote this letter in the 60s a.d.

**Greeting**

**1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, 2in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began 3and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;**

**4To Titus, my true child in a common faith:**

**Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.**

**Qualifications for Elders**

**5This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— 6if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. 7For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, 8but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. 9He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.**

**10For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. 11They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. 12One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” 13This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. 15To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. 16They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.**

**Teach Sound Doctrine**

**2 But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. 2Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. 3Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. 6Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. 7Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, 8and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. 9Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.**

**11For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.**

**15Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.**

**Be Ready for Every Good Work**

**3 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, 2to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. 3For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. 4But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. 9But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.**

**Final Instructions and Greetings**

**12When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. 14And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.**

**15All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith.**

**Grace be with you all. [[50]](#footnote-50)**

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15. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Th2.9&off=6&ctx=hessalonians.%0a2%3a9+++~Greeks+considered+ma) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Th 2:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Th2.11&off=7&ctx=Cor+9%3a3%E2%80%9314).%0a2%3a11+++~Paul+considered+hims) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Th 2:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Th2.12&off=559&ctx=Sexual+Ethics+DPL%0a++~The+Greek+word+used+) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Th 2:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Th2.15&off=7&ctx=%0a++Suffering%0a2%3a15+++~Paul+advises+that+ne) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Th 2:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
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22. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Th2.18&off=7&ctx=pare+v.+11).%0a2%3a18+++~Satan++is+the+enemy+) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Th 2:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Th2.19&off=7&ctx=%0a++Satan+DDD%0a2%3a19+++~Paul+shared+similar+) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Th 2:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Th3.1&off=6&ctx=3%3a1+++~A+city+in+the+Roman+province+of+Ac) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Th 3:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Th3.2&off=160&ctx=n+1+Thess+1%3a1%E2%80%9310.%0a++~The+Greek+word+used+) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Th 3:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
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27. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Th3.5&off=6&ctx=r+experience.%0a3%3a5+++~Refers+to+Satan+(com) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Th 3:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Ac22.9&off=0&ctx=u+are+persecuting.%E2%80%99+~9%C2%A0m%EF%BB%BFNow+those+who+we) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ac 22:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.1Co15.52&off=0&ctx=all+all+be+changed%2c+~52%C2%A0in+a+moment%2c+in+t) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 15:52. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Mt24.31&off=0&ctx=er+and+great+glory.+~31%C2%A0And+w%EF%BB%BFhe+will+sen) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mt 24:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Is59.16&off=168&ctx=usness+%E2%80%A2upheld+him.+~%0a+17%C2%A0+r%EF%BB%BF%E2%80%A2He+put+on+r) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Is 59:16–17. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Eph6.13&off=0&ctx=he+heavenly+places.+~13%C2%A0Therefore+p%EF%BB%BFtake+) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eph 6:13–17. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.2Th2.2&off=238&ctx=ce+of+this+rumor.%0a++~Someone+may+have+for) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 2 Th 2:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The king’s disregard for the desire of women is sandwiched between two clauses depicting his arrogant disregard for deity. The “desire of women” might be the Messiah whom Herod tried to destroy at Bethlehem. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Antonia in Jerusalem, the Herodion near Bethlehem, and Masada are examples of fortresses built by Herod. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.1Th4.16&off=0&ctx=have+fallen+asleep.+~16%C2%A0For+n%EF%BB%BFthe+Lord+hi) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Th 4:16–17. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.2Th2.2&off=238&ctx=ce+of+this+rumor.%0a++~Someone+may+have+for) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 2 Th 2:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.1Co14.29&off=0&ctx=himself+and+to+God.+~29%C2%A0%E2%80%A2Let+two+or+three) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 14:29. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Ti3.1-7&off=6&ctx=3%3a1%E2%80%937+~Paul+provides+a+list+of+qualificat) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Ti 3:1–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Ac20.17&off=35&ctx=the+Ephesian+Elders%0a~17%C2%A0Now+from+Miletus+) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ac 20:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Ac20.28&off=0&ctx=ole+counsel+of+God.+~28%C2%A0l%EF%BB%BFPay+careful+att) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ac 20:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Ti3.2&off=600&ctx=yteros+Word+Study%0a++~The+Greek+word+used+) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Ti 3:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Ti3.2&off=979&ctx=d+Timothy+(6%3a14).%0a++~The+Greek+text+here%2c) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Ti 3:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Ti2.15&off=1358&ctx=or+(compare+v.+9).+%0a~The+Stoics++consider) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Ti 2:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Ti3.2&off=3193&ctx=See+note+on+2%3a15.%0a++~Overseers+who+meet+t) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Ti 3:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. John D. Barry et al., [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsb?ref=Bible.1Ti3.8-13&off=7&ctx=n+1+Tim+3%3a6.%0a3%3a8%E2%80%9313+~The+list+of+qualific) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 1 Ti 3:8–13. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
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48. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Ac2.32&off=0&ctx=esh+see+corruption.+~32%C2%A0This+Jesus+a%EF%BB%BFGod+) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ac 2:32–33. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Jn20.24&off=17&ctx=%E2%80%9D+%0aJesus+and+Thomas%0a~24%C2%A0Now+o%EF%BB%BFThomas%2c+one) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 20:24–29. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.1Th&off=48385) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Th–Tt 3:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)