

A STUDY OF 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS FOR TEEN GIRLS

FAITHFUL ONE



AMY-JO GIRARDIER

 **LifeWay**
Biblical Solutions for Life

A STUDY OF 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS FOR TEEN GIRLS

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AMY-JO GIRARDIER

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About the Author



Amy-Jo Girardier is the Girls Minister at Brentwood Baptist in Brentwood, TN. She has been serving in this role for 11 years and still can't believe this is what she gets to do for a job! Originally from Springfield, Illinois, Amy-Jo graduated from Southwest Baptist University and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to pursue a Masters in Christian Education. She is the founding editor of *www.girlsminister.com*, a website created to connect and resource girls ministers, moms, and youth workers engaged in the girls ministry conversation. Amy-Jo is a contributor to *youthministry360.com*, and *faithvillage.com*. In addition to ministry, Amy-Jo loves using technology, passing on her love of technology to others, drinking coffee, running, serving with her husband Darrel, loving on her son Scout, and chill-axing with her Boston Terrier Diesel.

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About the Study

This eight-session resource will lead girls through an in-depth study of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. They will examine biblical context and a multitude of spiritual truths in these letters from the apostle Paul. Girls will discover more about the character of Christ and come to know Him as the Faithful One who reigns supreme. They will be challenged to live as faithful followers of Jesus in a world desperate for the gospel.

We recommend offering an initial introductory session so girls can get more information about the focus of the study and details for weekly group meetings. Consider showing the Intro Video included on the Leader Kit DVD to introduce the author and give an overview of the resource.

How to Use

In this book, you will find content for weekly group studies, daily personal studies, and leader guide notes in the back. Each week is organized into the following sections:

❖ Scripture page

This is the first page of each session and is designed to help girls interact with the focal chapter. The page includes space for them to underline, circle, and draw symbols in the margins as instructed throughout the week.

❖ Intro

This page is designed to open the session with illustrations and object lessons.

❖ Between the Lines

This section contains the bulk of the group Bible study, including historical context, word studies, and discussion questions.

❖ Reflect and Respond

This section is designed to help girls apply what they have learned.

❖ Share Your Story

We want to encourage girls to share on social media what they are learning and thinking about as they journey through this study. For those who don't use social media, there is space provided to write responses to each challenge.

❖ Going Deeper

There are five days of additional personal study material that will help girls dig deeper into the truths found in each chapter of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. We encourage you to talk about this material each week as you meet in the group setting.

SESSION I

The Imprint of Christ

I THESSALONIANS 1:1-10

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. **2** We always thank God for all of you, remembering you constantly in our prayers. **3** We recall, in the presence of our God and Father, your work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, **4** knowing your election, brothers loved by God. **5** For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with much assurance. You know what kind of men we were among you for your benefit, **6** and you became imitators of us and of the Lord when, in spite of severe persecution, you welcomed the message with joy from the Holy Spirit. **7** As a result, you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. **8** For the Lord's message rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place that your faith in God has gone out. Therefore, we don't need to say anything, **9** for they themselves report what kind of reception we had from you: how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God **10** and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Intro

It's hard to imagine a world without instant communication like texting or social media, but just for fun, let's pretend that those methods of communication don't exist right now. What if your only options for sending a message were:

- ♦ A message in a bottle (a note sealed in a bottle and left floating in the ocean for someone to find)
- ♦ A message by airmail (a packet that is sent from one person to another by plane)
- ♦ A message by courier (a messenger sent to deliver the message personally)

How would the method of communication impact the message you wanted to communicate?

How do you prefer to receive messages and encouragement from others?

A. A direct message on Twitter

B. A "like" or "comment" on Instagram

C. A text message

Look at the text messages you sent most recently. Imagine you had to send those words by way of a message in a bottle. Now imagine how difficult it might be for someone other than the recipient to pick up your message and try to decipher it. Since the note you sent was intended to be read by someone specific, anyone else reading it would miss the full intention and significance of your words without some context (the "who, what, when, where, and why" of a message).

We must approach this study with a similar perspective. As we get ready to dig into chapter 1 of 1 Thessalonians, there are a few things we need to take note of if we are to grasp the depth and richness of the words. Otherwise, it will feel like we've just picked up a message in a bottle or reached into a stranger's mailbox and started reading a letter with no context. Let's start with some background information to get a clearer picture of Paul's letter to this group of believers.

Between the Lines

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to a group of new believers in Thessalonica. It will become very evident as you read that the Thessalonians had found a very special place in Paul's heart. You'll see strong phrases such as, "we were torn away from you in person, not in heart," and "we long to see you," used throughout the passages. Paul had a significant message to share with a group of people who had come to mean a great deal to him in a short amount of time. (See the Historical Context box for more insight.) As I've thought about the words Paul wrote, it has been helpful to compare the time he spent with the Thessalonians to the equivalent of a short-term mission trip. Sadly, this particular "mission trip" abruptly ended with rioting by unbelievers who forced Paul and his companions out of town. The amount of time may have been short, but the impact was huge.

Though Paul was physically in another part of Greece, his love for the Thessalonians and his desire to see them grow spiritually weighed heavy on his heart. I imagine that he could not get their faces out of his mind as he prayed for them diligently. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, he began writing the letter we now know as 1 Thessalonians. From the very beginning, it is apparent Paul had some key points that he wanted to communicate to his friends and fellow believers in Thessalonica.

As we read God's Word together, I want you to interact with the text. Use the Scripture page at the beginning of each session (p. 7 for Session 1) to underline, circle, and draw as we dig deeper into each passage.

Read chapter 1 together now.

Underline verse 5. Notice the way Paul alludes back to the time when he and his companions first visited Thessalonica and shared the gospel with them. **Read Acts 17:2-4.**

Write Acts 17:2-4 in the margin next to verse 5 as a cross reference with insight into Paul's original missionary journey to Thessalonica.

What message had Paul originally preached to the Thessalonians?

How did the people respond to this message?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Academic researchers have debated just how short Paul's time in Thessalonica was. Based on Acts 17, it documents three weeks with the Thessalonian believers before Paul and his friends were forced out of town. Other commentaries have extended his time to as long as six months.¹

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Thessalonica was a major city in Macedonia that became an important trade route in the Roman Empire during this time frame. The culture was decidedly pagan and immoral. There was much persecution for those who claimed the resurrected Christ as their Lord and Savior. Paul did not want these new believers to get discouraged or be deceived as they lived out their faith in this dark culture, so he wrote letters to keep them focused on the gospel message.

WORD STUDY

Mimetes: Greek word for imitators; we get our English word *mimic* from this Greek word. Also translated into our English word *follower*.²

WORD STUDY

Tupos: Greek word for example; translation literally means “the indention left from a strike, or a blow” or “to make an imprint.” We get our English word, *type* from this Greek word.³

The message Paul preached was the resurrected Christ! Now in his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul gave them a picture for the kind of people they were becoming known as because of the transformational work of Christ in their lives.

Read verse 6 and circle the word *imitators*.

The picture Paul was conveying is a powerful one. For *imitators*, he used the Greek word *mimetes*, which is where we get our English word, *mimic*. Now the thing that blew my mind as I was studying this passage is that *mimetes* is also the Greek word translated into our English word *follower*. I don’t know about you, but I hear the phrase “Christ-follower” so often in the church that it’s easy to lose sight of what it really means. These Thessalonians were understanding for the first time what it meant to mimic Christ and to follow His example in every area of their lives.

Describe the character and attitudes of one who mimics Christ with his or her life.

Unfortunately in our postmodern culture, to follow Christ has taken on different meanings. Some people think being a “good, moral person” is what it means to follow Christ. Others think that going to church on Sundays is following Christ. But Scripture presents a very different picture of what it truly means to pattern our lives after Jesus.

Read verse 7 and draw a box around the word *example*.

Paul painted another rich picture in verse 7 by using the word *example*. The Greek word used is *tupos*. There are a few different translations of this word, but one means “the indention left from a strike, or a blow” or “to make an imprint.” We get our English word *type* from this Greek word.⁴ It’s the idea of something like a typewriter key striking a page and leaving the imprint of a particular letter or letters on the page for everyone to read. In Paul’s day it would be like making a stamp in clay. He was describing for the Thessalonians what it meant to live their lives in such a way that they left an indention—a TYPE—that people saw and recognized as a Christ-follower. Paul reiterated this picture for his young pastor friend Timothy when he said in 1 Timothy 4:12, *You should be an example to the believers*.

Write 1 Timothy 4:12 in the margin next to verse 7 as a cross reference where Paul used the same Greek word for *example*.

Reflect and Respond

Based on this message to the Thessalonians, I walk away asking some key questions that lay the groundwork for what it truly means to be a faithful one who follows **THE Faithful One**. Paul made it abundantly clear that our lives leave marks or “examples” that identify who and what we are following. May we leave an imprint of Christ everywhere we go!

Have you made a personal commitment to follow Christ? If so, when? If not, what is holding you back?

What are some ways in which the Holy Spirit is working in you and making you more like Christ?

In what areas do you struggle most to be faithful?

If your life’s story was typed out for the world to read, what message(s) do you think would be communicated most vividly?

Because social media is such a great tool for sharing our stories, I want to encourage you to post what you are learning as we journey through this study. You’ll find a section called “Share Your Story” at the end of each session with a specific challenge for that day. As you share, use #FaithfulOne. If you don’t use social media, there is space provided to write your response.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Challenge: The apostle Paul understood that in order to BE a faithful follower, we need to embrace the Faithful One named Christ. Share what having a relationship with Jesus means to you.

#FaithfulOne


As you begin each day of personal study, it’s important to recognize that we are not just going deeper for the sake of knowledge. We are coming to God with a desire to know Him more and to have our hearts molded by the truth of His Word. Start this time with prayer. Prayer is simply an honest conversation between your heart and God. Your most authentic prayer on some days might start like this: “Jesus, I’m tired today but I know I need You in my life. Capture my attention as I read Your Word. Amen.” Find a place where you will not be distracted. Put your devices on “Do Not Disturb” mode and show up ready to meet with God.

Whatever it is that you need to say to Him, I invite you to do that now by writing a prayer in the space provided.

Recently, I was cleaning out boxes from my childhood room and stumbled across an old group note collectively written by about seven of my friends during a study hall. This particular study hall was very strict and had a zero tolerance policy on talking—but we could write and pass notes all day long. It was kind of like looking at a group text, but the value of having it in a note form with our own handwriting and doodles made it priceless.

I want you to consider doing something similar with the two letters called 1 and 2 Thessalonians. You are not just an observer or a third party that has intercepted a message from Paul to a group of believers in Thessalonica. Scripture is God’s message and He has something for you to hear as well! Each session will include a page with the chapter written out. Use this page (p. 7 in this session) to interact with the passage you are studying. I will guide you through some questions and activities so you can participate in the learning process. Think of yourself as one of the friends in my group note adding your questions, doodles, and comments in the margins. Not only will you get to see some cool visuals jump out in each chapter, you’ll also have a keepsake of what God taught you as you read His Word.

Now take a moment to read 1 Thessalonians chapter one aloud or quietly to yourself. Once you’ve read through it, focus in on the following words and phrases.



Underline we always thank God in verse 2. Next, draw a turkey in the margin near the word *thank*. When you think of a turkey, what holiday comes to mind? Thanksgiving! One of the key themes of this letter is encouragement. Paul wanted these new believers to know he was thankful for them because he could see the evidence of Christ at work in them. From now on, when you

see something about giving thanks, you “turkey” that phrase and look for what Paul was drawing their attention to. More than likely, it will be the activity of Christ in their lives.

In verse 3, Paul primarily thanked God for three things: the *faith*, *love*, and *hope* the Thessalonians had experienced because of Christ. These three themes (faith, love, and hope) will come up again and again so, yes, we have pictures for them as well. Let’s use a cross for faith, a heart for love, and sunshine for hope. **Go ahead and draw those images in the margin next to verse 3.**



Through Paul’s description of the Thessalonians, we discover that these three attributes defined them. They had become famous outside their own town because of their faith, love, and hope. For now, let’s focus on the last word...*hope*. The kind of hope described here is a sure thing, yet based on a reality not yet seen. These early Christians clung to the hope that Christ would one day return even as they lived in the reality of the “not yet.” We know that same kind of hope today.

Read verses 8-9. Draw a cross, heart, and sunshine in the margin to highlight the fact that their faith, love, and hope were making an impact on others.

According to verse 9, how did the Thessalonians respond to the gospel message Paul had originally preached?

Why do you think those actions were significant?

SHARE YOUR STORY

Challenge: *What would it look like for your life to reflect the brilliance of Christ and point our culture to His faithfulness? Finish this prayer: Lord, help me to point others to You by...*


#FaithfulOne

Each day we will read the chapter for the week again with fresh eyes. Continue using page 7 in your book to interact with the text as we focus on specific verses.

Read 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 now and circle any words or phrases that catch your attention. Is there a verse that makes you ask a question as you read it? Go ahead and underline that verse and put a question mark in the margin.

This may be a new way for you to interact with God’s Word, but keep in mind that when you go into this time seeking God, you will find Him. The Holy Spirit will be faithful to help you discover truth, examine your own heart, and enjoy His presence.

Here is a glimpse of what interacting with Scripture in this way looks like for me...While I was reading this chapter, verses 2 and 3 stuck out to me. I underlined, “remembering you constantly in our prayers. We recall in the presence of our God...” That prompted me to write this question in the margin: “Who are the people I talk to Jesus about? How often do I mention them in my prayers?” That’s a beautiful picture, isn’t it? To me, it’s such a precious gift to think that other people are talking to Jesus about me, or approaching Him on my behalf at different times. I want to be able to do that as well. As a result of a simple question that came to mind as I read, I started talking to God about the people He brought to my heart’s attention. I did not expect to have that experience as I began reading chapter one that day. But what a sweet experience! Now it’s your turn.

 **Underline the following sentence from verse 6: in spite of severe persecution, you welcomed the message with joy from the Holy Spirit. Over the word *persecution*, draw a bandage to represent the fact that the persecution they endured was not just verbal, but physical.**

The Thessalonians lived in a culture where the cost of following Christ was steep. A few years ago, I decided I wanted to visit a place where being a Christian was illegal and persecution like what the early church experienced was still very real. I went with my mother and a mentor who was familiar with the culture of Southeast Asia. We flew in and were immediately told what words we were NOT allowed to use while we were there for fear it could put the Christians and missionaries we were meeting with at extreme risk.

- What do you think is the most dangerous word for Christians in Southeast Asia?**
- A. Church**
 - B. God**
 - C. Prayer**
 - D. Missionary**

Some of the words on the list of “things not to say” were: Christian, church, Jesus, God, prayer, and Bible. But *missionary* was at the top of the list of extremely volatile words. As I met in secret with pastors and other “M’s” (missionaries) to hear about how Christ was at work, the interesting thing I

kept hearing over and over again was how THEY were praying for US! They had heard stories of how the church in the West was “sleeping.” They had heard about many American Christians who had taken their faith for granted. These Southeast Asian believers were confronted daily with the cost of following Christ while the evidence seemed to indicate we in America thought very seldom about that cost. For many Christ-followers around the world, persecution is real—they meet in secret, hide their Bibles, and speak cautiously. Their jobs, their families and, in some areas, even their lives are at risk because of their faith. And yet...the church in Southeast Asia where we visited was thriving! The government declared Christianity illegal because they were scared of how the gospel transforms lives. The gospel restores people’s dignity, it sets people free, and it gives people purpose and courage. As difficult as it is to be a Christ-follower in Southeast Asia, God is doing a mighty work and many are willingly facing each new day believing that whatever happens, He is worth it!

Now that you have a sense of what persecution is like today, let’s journey back in time to when the early church was first experiencing it. Put yourself in the shoes (ahem, sandals) of the Thessalonians as you answer the following questions.

What words from chapter 1 of Paul’s letter do you think encouraged the Thessalonians the most in the midst of their persecution?

Are you currently experiencing any form of persecution as a result of your faith in Christ? At home, at school, or with friends? Explain.


Write anything that may be hindering you from living with spiritual boldness.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Challenge: *The Thessalonians were examples of faithful imitators of Christ, no matter the cost. Hebrews 13:3 tells us to “Remember the prisoners, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily.” Today there are still persecuted Christians around the world. Write a message of encouragement to those who have chosen to live out their faith...no matter the cost.*

#FaithfulOne

Begin with a time of prayer to focus your heart. Ask God to show you whatever it is that He wants you to learn, confess, or live out today. Continue using page 7 in your book to interact with the text as we focus on specific verses.

 **Read 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 again with a fresh perspective. When you get to verse 7, pause at the word example. In the margin next to this verse, draw a footprint to symbolize example.**

In our first session, we looked at the Greek word *tupos* used for our word *example* and discovered that the word picture that goes along with it is that of a stamp or typewriter. Today we are going to see another picture this Greek word portrays—a footprint.⁵ Paul used the same root word in Philippians 3:17 when he said, *Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us* (ESV).

There was a lot of walking done in Paul’s day. There were dusty roads and lots of footprints to be seen. Today we typically only see footprints on the beach or in muddy places. We don’t usually walk long journeys in places where we can turn and see where we’ve come from or literally follow in someone’s footsteps like you could in Paul’s day.

Think about the steps your feet have taken. Draw a footprint to help you process some spiritual application. On the big toe, write one place you have gone that you would love to go back to again. Inside the middle toe, write one place you did not like going. On the heel of the foot, write about a time when you “put your foot down” and took a stand in a difficult situation.

I have a love/hate relationship with my feet. I love to run, but I have foot problems that cause me a lot of pain when I run. I played collegiate soccer for four years and experienced some pretty extensive damage to my already bad feet. I was told then that one day I would have to have surgery. That day came in 2006 and 2008. I had bones cut, shifted, and bolted together in some form or fashion in both of my feet. After the first surgery, I was unable to walk for nine weeks. The first time I put my foot down after surgery, I couldn’t remember how to walk. We take walking for granted. I wrote a letter to myself during this whole endeavor so I wouldn’t forget all that God taught me about walking. *“Dear AJ, You just had surgery. You have horrible feet. Your feet got out of line because you took poorly formed feet and pushed them to their limits with track in high school and college soccer. Now as an adult they won’t let you do what you need them to do. You had a hard time moving from pain to surgery to healing to walking forward again. You*

couldn’t remember how to walk. Someone actually told you what you were doing wrong and that you were forgetting to walk heel to toe. It was quite a hard time for you to reteach your muscles and endure limping publicly.” The phases I went through in this process were as follows:

- ✦ **Ignoring:** I didn’t want to deal with the pain so I just kept pushing through.
- ✦ **Correcting:** I went to extremes in college even with physical therapists creating a bulky plastic protector that was taped to my foot instead of surgery that was needed.
- ✦ **Numbness:** My foot would go numb from bones pinching on nerves.
- ✦ **Surgery:** It became mandatory to have surgery to realign and remove some bones.
- ✦ **Crippling:** I had a time of complete immobility where I had to use crutches.
- ✦ **Baby steps:** I had to relearn how to walk and ended up limping for quite awhile.
- ✦ **Practice:** I had to practice and continue to walk forward one step at a time.

To me this was as much a faith journey as it was a physical journey. As I wondered if I would ever be able to take a normal step again, I spent many moments in prayer. It became an illustration of my own walk with God. It’s healthy to pause and consider how our walk with Christ is unfolding. Here are some questions to help you consider your own walk of faith.

Where are you on your faith walk? Is there a spiritual question or sin that is crippling your relationship with God? Explain.

Are you ignoring your relationship with God? If so, why?

Are you numb spiritually? If so, what is causing that numbness?

Are you stalled or moving forward?

What do your footprints say about the direction you are heading?

A walk with Christ is a process of learning and growing. The question we must all begin with is this: Are you following His lead or have you chosen a different set of footprints to follow?

SHARE YOUR STORY

Challenge: *What would you say to those who may be walking in the footprints you are leaving behind?*

#FaithfulOne

Begin with a time of prayer to focus your heart. Continue using page 7 in your book to interact with the text as we focus on specific verses.

Read 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 again and circle any words or phrases that catch your attention this time around.

Don't give in to the temptation to just skim over the chapter because you've read it several times now. I once heard someone describe God's Word like a diamond. A diamond has many facets and when turned or observed in the light, a different aspect of beauty is discovered. As we search Scripture daily, His light illuminates truths that though we've read them a hundred times before, become fresh and new again. Isn't that exciting? Never underestimate the power of God's Word.

Let's look back at Acts 17:2-4, the cross-reference we looked at in session one to get insight into Paul's first missionary journey to Thessalonica. Go back and read those verses now.

In Acts 17:2-4, Paul uses the word *proclaim*. It is from the Greek word *katangéllō* which means to proclaim or announce publicly.⁶ In ancient times this was done by a herald employed by the king or government to make announcements to the people. Paul used the word for proclamation to point to an announcement from his King Jesus that included good news for all people. It's important to remember that the message that was tied to *katangéllō* was Paul proclaiming what Christ has done, not what he (Paul) had done or not done. He preached about how Christ works. Christ brings life where death has been. Christ breaks the shackles of sin where it once enslaved. When the work of Christ is preached and lived out, then you will experience transformation that people take notice of. This is what was happening among the Thessalonians. It was a published message of Christ's work upon their lives.

 **Underline verse 8. Now in the margin, draw the symbol for message, which will be a bullhorn.**

Can you imagine how exciting it was to be a Christian in Thessalonica at this time in history? Yes, there was certainly danger. But it was never boring! When they woke up in the morning and set their feet on the ground, they knew Christ was at work and they wanted to be a part of it.

I shared with you about the difficulties I have had with my feet. After I had my son, I didn't have the luxury of letting my feet gear up for the day like I had been doing. As soon as I heard him cry, I had to pop out of bed and get to his room quickly to make sure he had what he needed. I began to dread when my feet would hit the ground because they were hurting so badly. I realized one early morning as I looked at my feet, that the first words out of my heart were words of dread to start the day. It had nothing to do with my son. I just dreaded taking that first, second, and third steps to start my day. God really began to deal with me about this. He laid the Scripture, Isaiah 6:8, on my heart. It's the passage where Isaiah responds to God's call and proclaims, *Here I am. Send me.* I decided that at that moment, I would place that prayer in a visible spot where I would see it every

morning and remind myself that I am sent. When my feet touch the floor now, I see: "send me." And the first spot those feet go is into the room of my little boy. And I share with Him the love of Jesus as best as I can. And then the next spot those feet go is to minister to girls and their families at the church where I work. And I share with them the love of Jesus as best as I can. And the next spot those feet go...well that's the exciting part because every day I live with expectation of where He will send me. But I have found what interests people I talk with most, whether it's my hair stylist, my favorite waiter, my friend who is journeying in her investigation with Christ, or random people I interact with while traveling, is a Christ-centered, Christ-proclaiming conversation. They are fascinated with hearing stories about how the Lord is at work in my life and the lives around me. We need to be proclaiming: "See that? That's Christ! That's nothing you or I could have done."

As we conclude today, I want you to begin to exercise your spiritual eyes to see the work of Christ. If you are surrounded by only Christ-followers, then I encourage you to take your feet to some new places. One way to begin to find opportunities to proclaim Christ, is by routinely going to places and cultivating friendships with people God gives you opportunity to connect with. If you are truly living a "Christ-proclaimed" kind of life, then it won't be long before people discover there's something different about you. If you are surrounded by those who are not Christ-followers and they haven't asked you about Christ, that may be an indicator that they aren't seeing the message of Christ preached through your daily walk. It may be that they don't see much of a difference in the way you live your life and the way they live theirs.

Who is God urging you to share His message with through your conversations and actions?

Think of the places you go most often. Are there people there that need to be encouraged spiritually? Are there people there who do not know Christ? Begin to pray for opportunities to make connections with people you interact with about Christ's work.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Challenge: *Where have you seen Christ at work lately? Have you seen Christ restore a broken situation or redeem a broken relationship? Share about that experience.*

#FaithfulOne

Hello friend. You’re back for more! Congratulations on faithfully returning to work on this study each day this week. I hope by now you have a spot or a few distraction free zones you have been frequenting that allow your heart and mind to get on the same page with God. Make sure you shut off those devices and get ready to enjoy your last day in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. Continue using page 7 to make notes and draw the pictures as we go through.

Start by reading the chapter again. As you come to the last two verses, it is rich with content. Draw a box around the words *turned to God* in verse 9. Off to the side, draw an arrow pointing away from the passage to symbolize turning away from the idols. The word *turned* here means to change one’s beliefs.⁷ The Thessalonians had once believed in idols and turned from them to embrace the living God!

Next, draw a box around the word *serve* in verse 9. Draw a symbol like a stick figure kneeling with hands raised to illustrate that the Thessalonians no longer bowed to idols but to God. They turned away from dead idols, and were put to work for the living and true God. Their allegiance was to Him and they served His purposes in His kingdom.

Finally, I want you to place a box around the word *wait* in verse 10. Draw a clock.

When was the last time you waited for something? What was it? Draw the type of emotion you associate with waiting in the space below.

When I hear the word *wait*, it often makes me think I have to just sit still. We wait in lines. We sit in restaurant lobbies waiting for our names to be called so we can eat. We give the word *wait* a bad name. But interestingly enough we have people with the title “waiters,” and they are anything but snoozers. They are actively checking on people and serving them. Waiting is an action. It’s not just sitting on the sidelines. The Thessalonians were busy serving while they waited for Christ’s return. As Christ-followers, we’re not just standing by in some lobby waiting for God to call our number so we can get to heaven. We have things to do while He has us here!

Underline the entire verse 10 and draw a king’s crown off to the side. We will use this symbol several times as we read through 1 Thessalonians. Why? Because Paul reminded the Thessalonians often that Jesus was coming back. I chose the crown image to symbolize the return of our King Jesus. The Thessalonians actively waited in expectation for Jesus to return. Every morning they woke up and believed it could be the day they saw Christ face-to-face.

How do you think that impacted the way they served?

How do you think that impacted the culture they lived in?

The anticipation of this reality is central to our faith in Christ! Unfortunately, many Christians today have let little expectations block the big expectation that we should be focused on. Friends, is it possible that we are wasting time on things that have little eternal significance, when we should be waiting with expectation for the Faithful One who most certainly will return?

In the space below, make a list of the things you tend to wait expectantly for on the left-hand side. On the right-hand side make a list of how those things could become idols or false gods.

Things you wait expectantly for	How these things could become idols

The Thessalonian believers ditched their idols for the one true God! They had been waiting for these old non-living idols to fulfill their dreams but when they experienced the power of Christ, they knew the difference between death and life. They woke up! They turned, served, and learned to wait patiently on God. And so should we.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Challenge: *What would it look like to wake up every morning living as if it is the day you will meet Jesus face-to-face? Share how you would live if today is the day.*

#FaithfulOne