

(13) As for the rest of you, dear brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good.

- This diversion from work affected only a few. He urges the rest to never **tire** of **doing good** by working.

(14) Take note of those who refuse to obey what we say in this letter. Stay away from them so they will be ashamed.

- The believers who persisted in not working were to be avoided socially, causing them to be ashamed.

(15) Don't think of them as enemies, but warn them as you would a brother or sister.

- **Wilbur Fields** writes: Some people are just too stubborn and willful to be treated gently. They do not appreciate nor respond to kindness. But few people can bear the test of being left severely alone. Therefore Paul tells us that if any church member will not obey the instructions in this letter that his Christian brothers are to take notice of him and have no company with him. If he will not repent because the apostles of Christ have spoken, he must be made ashamed of his course by seeing that it is repudiated by the church.

(16) Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you His peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you all. (17) HERE IS MY GREETING IN MY OWN HANDWRITING – PAUL. I DO THIS IN ALL MY LETTERS TO PROVE THEY ARE FROM ME.

- Just as every reader is faced with fraudulent news today, so there were fraudulent letters being circulated in Paul's time.

(18) May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

2 Thessalonians Chapters 1-3

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The Translation:

We have chosen the *New Living Translation* for this study. It is a thought-for-thought translation made by 90 translators.

Resources:

We have consulted and quoted from **Burton Coffman** (*Coffman's Commentaries on the Bible*), **William Barclay** (*Daily Study Bible*), **Wilbur Fields** (*Thinking Through Thessalonians*) and **John William McGarvey** (*Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans*.)

J. W. McGarvey gives us the date of writing: “We would therefore date this letter in the latter part of A. D. 52 or the early part of A. D. 53. Jesus had left the world about twenty-three years before, promising to return at an indefinite date. This indefiniteness gave free scope to the conjectures of his early followers, until the clear teaching of his apostles brought about a better understanding.”

(2 Thessalonians 1:1) This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- As in 1 Thessalonians, **Paul** included his working companions in the greeting, and **Silas** may have done the work of getting this letter on parchment. This is a followup to his first letter.
- Note the names and titles:

Lord: He is the ruler just as Caesar was the political lord.

Jesus: The earthly name of the second person of the Godhead assigned by the angel Gabriel. Luke 1:31.

Christ: The Greek form of Messiah — Anointed — long expected as based on the Old Testament. Psalm 2:2, Daniel 9:26.

(2) May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

- Paul includes a prayer in his greeting.

(3) Dear brothers and sisters, we can't help but thank God for you, because your faith is flourishing and your love for one another is growing.

- Paul has been hearing glowing reports about their **growing faith** and expanding **love**. There was a problem or two with some individuals in the church but that did not mar Paul's evaluation of the group and he later addresses the sin on the part of one or two.
- **Thanksgiving** was a grand characteristic of Paul. May it become a personal policy of each of us. Being negative is so natural and easy, learning to be thankful is a work of the Holy Spirit within us.

(4) We proudly tell God's other churches about your endurance and faithfulness in all the persecutions and hardships you are suffering.

- The example of the Thessalonian church was being noised about by Paul as an example for other **churches**. They were standing firm while **enduring persecutions** and **hardships**. They were entitled to praise for standing firm during **hardships**.

(5) And God will use this persecution to show His justice and to make you worthy of His Kingdom, for which you

doing good, but we should not hesitate to be a visible and unashamed example.”

Paul's words were from the Lord, but his personal example was to be emulated. He had been a giver and not a taker. He worked long hours earning his living so as not to **burden** the new believers.

(9) We certainly had the right to ask you to feed us, but we wanted to give you an example to follow.

- While he had a **right** to be paid for teaching the Word of God, he chose to set an **example** of hard work.

(10) Even while we were with you, we gave you this command: "Those unwilling to work will not get to eat."

- Those who were **not willing to work** should go hungry. That's a powerful motivator.

(11) Yet we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and meddling in other people's business.

- But in spite of his example, some were **idle** and using their free time to **meddle** in the **business** of others. **Barclay** observes: “Paul disliked the busybody intensely. There may be greater sins than gossip but there is none which does more damage in the Church. A man who is doing his own work with his whole strength will have enough to do without being maliciously interested in the affairs of others.”

(12) We command such people and urge them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and work to earn their own living.

- The correction: **settle down** and get to **work**. He invokes his authority from the **Lord** to strengthen his orders.

(4) And we are confident in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we commanded you. (5) May the Lord lead your hearts into a full understanding and expression of the love of God and the patient endurance that comes from Christ.

- **Lead your hearts** has an interesting background. Other translations say “**direct your hearts.**” **Wilbur Fields** writes: “The word “direct” (*Kateuthum*) means to “make straight, guide, direct.” (Thayer).
Like a bee making a straight line to his hive, our hearts should be so prepared and directed by the divine nature within us that they will go straight and without wavering into the will of God.”

(6) And now, dear brothers and sisters, we give you this command in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Stay away from all believers who live idle lives and don't follow the tradition they received from us.

- Paul reminds his readers at Thessalonica that he is an official spokesman for the **Lord Jesus Christ**. Because of that, he orders them to avoid **believers** who lead **idle lives** and **don't follow** the things that he has taught them when he was among them.

(7) For you know that you ought to imitate us. We were not idle when we were with you. (8) We never accepted food from anyone without paying for it. We worked hard day and night so we would not be a burden to any of you.

- **Wilbur Fields** touches an important point: “Often I have marveled that Paul never hesitated to urge people to follow him. We are all aware of our own failings, and are therefore reluctant to tell people to imitate us. But the people in most churches will never rise higher than their leaders. So if the ministers and leaders do not set an example for the people to follow, the people will not rise to new spiritual heights. We should not boast about

are suffering. (6) In His justice He will pay back those who persecute you.

- With **God** there is **justice** in the final outcome of the story. In the end, His people always win, but in the unfolding of the story, there may be serious injustice because the enemy is the devil, the great **persecutor**. They are presently in the **Kingdom** and **suffering** because they are there.
- **Burton Coffman** speaks knowledgeably of **suffering** in general: “Alas, suffering is ever with us. There is no house it has not invaded, no home that is exempt from it and no life that is untouched by it. ‘The whole creation groaneth in travail’ (Romans 8:22), and this is true not merely in the teeming wards of great hospitals. Suffering is everywhere; and that person who is fortunate enough to have little of it in his own personal life is yet scarred and seared by it in the ravishing of loved ones.”

(7) And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with His mighty angels, (8) in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus.

- **Rest** is among God's wonderful promises. **Persecution** is tiring and calls for **rest**. **McGarvey** says of this **rest**, “It is the quiet haven of the storm-tossed barque.”
The mighty **angels** will accompany Jesus at His return. He had said near His death that He could ask the Father for an army of **angels** and they would come. Matthew 26:53. When Jesus comes from heaven, He will have their company. They will bring judgment on those who don't know God and the ones that refuse to obey the gospel.

(9) They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from His glorious power.

- They will be forever **separated** from the **Lord**. There is no second chance. Annihilation—going out of existence—is *not* discussed. This lifetime is also choice time. Either a person makes and keeps Jesus as Lord or they come to the end of their days to face eternal separation from the wonders that God has prepared for believers.

(10) When He comes on that day, He will receive glory from His holy people—praise from all who believe. And this includes you, for you believed what we told you about Him.

- Those left will give **glory** to Jesus. They have experience at this because they have been doing it at least weekly during life. We must learn to give **glory** to God every day by telling of His virtues.

(11) So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of His call. May He give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do.

- These believers were on Paul's prayer list. He prayed that they would be able to reach their spiritual goals. We need to have higher goals than having fun this weekend. Set spiritual goals of personal growth and getting active in the Lord's great work on earth. Written goals are best.

(12) Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with Him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.

- It honors the Lord when believers live as we are suppose to, especially when Jesus comes again. Notice that Paul calls Jesus **God**.

(16) Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, (17) comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say.

- It is **comforting** to know that **God loved** them and us. We are saved by His favor and strengthened towards success by the **hope** we share.

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(2 Thessalonians 3:1) Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we ask you to pray for us. Pray that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honored wherever it goes, just as when it came to you.

- **Burton Coffman:** “What a remarkable thing it is that the apostle Paul should continually have felt himself to be in need of the prayers of others. He was about to address his beloved converts regarding some of their shortcomings; and if there was ever a time when a gospel preacher needs the prayers of others on his own behalf, it is at such a time. Moreover, it appears that Paul constantly solicited the prayers of his Christian converts.”

(2) Pray, too, that we will be rescued from wicked and evil people, for not everyone is a believer.

- While Paul had those who would **pray** for him, there were also people who would like to silence him and end his life.

(3) But the Lord is faithful; He will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.

- **The Lord** is in this battle, providing **strength** to them directly by His indwelling Holy Spirit. They were not alone and we are not alone when we seek to please Him.

- The *Roman Catholic Church* professes to do miracles. For a list documented by the *Catholic Church* visit: shorturl.at/jzJV4
- Those who do not want **truth**, but settle for **lies** for whatever motive, will be **deceived**.

(12) Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.

- **Enjoyment** will turn into **condemnation**.

(13) As for us, we can't help but thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are always thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation--a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your belief in the truth.

- Paul was so **thankful** for these saints at Thessalonica because they were the **first** in their area to accept and **experience salvation**.

(14) He called you to salvation when we told you the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- The **calling** from the **Lord** was expressed through the words of Paul. They accepted the call and this puts them into the position of sharing in the **glory** of the **Lord**.

(15) With all these things in mind, dear brothers and sisters, stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you both in person and by letter.

- So these new believers were to **stand firm**, and not be upset by the false teachers. They were to keep a grip on what Paul had already taught them, both by his personal word and by 1 Thessalonians.

(2 Thessalonians 2:1) Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet Him.

- At the time, the believers knew that Christ would be returning, but the timing was not clear. This opened the subject to speculation, so Paul responded to the question of when will Christ come.

(2) Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us.

- Disturbers were claiming **that the day of the Lord** was already underway. They documented their nonsense by one of three ways: they had a **vision** or a **revelation** or a phony **letter** from Paul. **The day of the Lord** will be an event (not a process as implied in **begun**). Verse 8.

(3) Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed--the one who brings destruction.

- The new believers at Thessalonica would see some signs before Christ returns. A **rebellion** and a **man of lawlessness** will appear.

(4) He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.

- The arrogance of the man of lawlessness will culminate in him claiming to be **God**. **J.W. McGarvey** observes: "The Greek word for 'worship' is *sebasma* : from it came *Sebastis* or *Augustus* (*i. e. The Worshipful*), which was the title of the Roman emperors. A man of that age could hardly see this word in such a connection without thinking that Paul meant to convey the idea that the

antichrist would arrogate to himself all the reverence then claimed by the great civil lords of the earth, such as emperors, kings, etc. The temple is Paul's favorite metaphor for the church—1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21.”

(5) Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you?

- Paul had said this when he was with them in person, but they have forgotten. Teaching must be repeated and repeated.

(6) And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes.

- Heaven controls the timing of even large-scale events. Reading the Book of Acts with an emphasis on God's timing is an eye-opener. See the case beginning in Acts 8:26 where Philip meets the Ethiopian at an intersection, the treasurer is reading Scripture and he's puzzled about Isaiah 53. This was the perfect lead-in for Philip. There are many such cases of Divine timing in Acts.

(7) For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way.

- Paul speaks of an individual coming, but the individual may stand for a secession of individuals or a movement. In Daniel chapter 2, one man represented four successive empires. The lawlessness then represents the rise of the *Catholic Church*. **Alexander Campbell** so argued debating with **Bishop Purcell** of the *Catholic Church (Campbell-Purcell Debate)*. **Martin Luther** took the same view and he speaks as a former insider. An extensive discussion is found in **Burton Coffman's**

Commentaries on the Bible, 2 Thessalonians, “An excursus on ‘The Man of Sin.’”

- Who was doing the **holding back**? If the **lawless** one was lawless, then it is reasonable to say he was being held back by those who enforced law—the Roman government. That government would eventually fall and Mr. Lawless will have his way. **McGarvey** says: “When, notwithstanding the overshadowing emperor, the bishops of Rome began to assert themselves spiritually, they were still checked and restrained from revealing themselves as earthly potentates by the temporal power of the empire, just as the language of verses 6 and 7 so carefully distinguishes.”
- Paul had benefited from the law-keeping of the Roman Empire. Time and time again, his Roman citizenship saved him from unjust punishment. Roman officials arrested Paul, keeping the Jews from killing him, so saving his life. His citizenship sent him to Rome to plead his case--and he was released. Every believer wants to live where the law is enforced.

(8) Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath of His mouth and destroy him by the splendor of His coming.

- Further evidence that the **man of lawlessness** is a movement and not an individual is that he will last until **the Lord comes** again. We take the **breath of His mouth** to refer to the written Word of the **Lord Jesus**.

(9) This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. (10) He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. (11) So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies.