

OCTOBER

2026

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Dig Deeper Study Tools

Author's Purpose
Context
Structure
Linking Words
Parallels
Narrator's Comment
Vocabulary
Translations
Tone and Feel
Repetition
Quotation/Allusion
Genre
Copycat
Bible Timeline
"Who am I"
"So What"

1 Thessalonians – The Gospel-Centred Church

Sermon Series

28 September 2026

October Study 1

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

04, 11 October 2026

October Study 2

1 Thessalonians 2:1-3:13

BIBLE PROJECT OVERVIEW

This is most likely the earliest letter we have from Paul, and you can read the book of Acts chapter 17 to get the back story. Paul and his coworker Silas went to the ancient Greek city of Thessaloniki (or Thessalonica). After just one month of telling people the good news, a large number of both Jewish and Greek people gave their allegiance to Jesus and formed the first church community there. But trouble was brewing as Paul's announcement of the risen Jesus as the true Lord led to local opposition. The Christians in Thessaloniki were accused of defying Caesar, the Roman emperor, by "saying that there's another king, Jesus" ([Acts 17:7](#)). This led to persecution that became so intense that Paul and Silas were forced to flee from Thessaloniki. This was a doubly painful tragedy as they loved the people there.

This letter is Paul's attempt to reconnect with them after receiving a report from Timothy that the Thessalonian Christians were doing more than okay—they were flourishing despite intense persecution.

This letter was written with two main movements. The first section celebrates their faithfulness ([1 Thess. 1-3](#)), while the other section is a challenge to keep growing as followers of Jesus ([1 Thess. 4-6](#)). These two larger sections are surrounded by three prayers. The letter opens with a thanksgiving prayer in 1:1-5, with the two movements linked together by a transitional prayer in 3:11-13, and then the letter concludes with a final prayer in 5:23-28.

The Big Idea

Giving allegiance to Jesus as King leads to a countercultural and holy way of life, which can also generate suspicion and conflict. Jesus' followers should respond to such hostility with love, meeting opposition with grace, forgiveness, and generosity.

[from bibleproject.com]

Outline of 1 Thessalonians – The Gospel-Centred Church (with preaching schedule)

<i>BFA</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Text</i>
Oct Study 1	28 Sep	Gospel Transformation 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Oct Study 2	04 Oct	Gospel Integrity 1 Thess 2:1-16
	11 Oct	Gospel Servanthood 1 Thess 2:17-3:13
Nov Study 1	18 Oct	Gospel Living – Pleasing God 1 Thess 4:1-2
	25 Oct	ORPC ANNIVERSARY Romans 1:16-17
	01 Nov	Gospel Living – Work & Sexuality 1 Thess 4:3-12
	08 Nov	Gospel Hope 1 Thess 4:13-18
Nov Study 2	15 Nov	Gospel Expectation 1 Thess 5:1-11
	22 Nov	Gospel Holiness 1 Thess 5:12-28

PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Discipleship groups are meant to help people grow spiritually in community.

DISCIPLESHIP GROUP OBJECTIVES

Categories	Objectives
Build Community	Build friendships and community life on a deeper level and guide people to serve one another
Strengthen faith through study and application	Encourage people to grow by the study and application of God's word. Hold each other accountable
Help navigate life challenges	Minister to people of various life-stages and challenges
Offer support and encouragement	Discipleship group members offer support, care, and pray for one another
Outreach	Reach out or connect with those who are not part of a discipleship group

INDICATORS OF GROUP HEALTH

- Members know why the group exists and what is most important to the group
- Members consistently attend and demonstrate dedication to the group
- Members share ownership and responsibility for the sustainability of the group
- Members feel free to engage in authentic conversation and reflection on faith and life
- Members take care of each other
- Members feel free to invite others to join

28 September 2026
October Study 1
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): REFLECT

Read the text throughout the week(s) before your group time.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy,

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

Grace and peace to you.

Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' Faith

² We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. ³ We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶ You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷ And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹ for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell 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.

Notes and Questions

In Acts 16-17, we see the record of Paul, Silas, and Timothy preaching to the Thessalonians.

Silas = Silvanus

Acts 17 also records riots against the missionaries and their hosts.

PREPARE TO SHARE (INDIVIDUAL): LOOK BACK

What has God been teaching you in the last few weeks?

Who has God laid on your heart to pray for?

GROUP: SHARE AND PRAY

Take note of one another's prayer concerns.

Come together to pray for each other, the church, and the world (see this month's prayer bulletin).

GROUP: WORSHIP TOGETHER

Prepare your hearts to meet God and one another in His Word through worshipping together.

GROUP: STUDY 1

Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy evangelised Thessalonica (Acts 15:40-16:10), with the result that the Thessalonian church turned away from false gods to worship the true living God.

1. How is the Thessalonian church described (v.1)?
2. 1 Thess 1:2-3 tells us that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy always thanked God for each of the Thessalonian believers because of “your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - a. Consider if we see the same in each other’s lives – what do we witness in our DG members’ lives that we can give thanks for regularly?
 - b. What surprises you about this description? Why?
 - c. What does the “work produced by faith” look like in your life?
 - d. How can you labour in your love when it comes to your relationship with others in the church? What about those outside of the church?

- e. Explain why hope is so important in the Christian life. How does your hope for the future influence how you live today?
-
- 3. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy are certain that the Thessalonian believers are loved by God and chosen by Him.
 - a. What gives them this certainty? (See 1 Thess 1:5-10, 3:6).
 - b. If others were to think about us and consider what they have heard about us, would they have this same certainty about our election by God for salvation? Why, or why not?

The Thessalonian church lived as imitators of Christ, and of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy by welcoming the gospel message with the joy of the Holy Spirit despite severe suffering that comes with it (See 1 Thess 1:6, 2:14-15). Dishonour was publicly ascribed to them (individually and corporately) because they abandoned social expectations to be part of civic cults (including that of the emperor), in addition to idol worship. In a sense, they were seen as having betrayed their family and their people when they chose to be associated with this faith and with these missionaries.

- 4. Today, Christianity is one of many faiths in the world, although increasingly also seen as an unacceptable faith by the world. What makes this faith unacceptable in the sight of the world today?

5. What would it look like for believers in ORPC to be as fully committed to Christ as the Thessalonian church looks to have been? What is stopping us from this?

God transforms those whom He has chosen for salvation. We should expect therefore that genuine conversion will produce visible results. This is what we see in 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 – the lives of the Thessalonian church prove their authentic faith, showing that their faith was real, active, and contagious. Their faith did not only change their own lives, but it also impacted the lives of the people around them. The Thessalonian church preached the gospel actively, with the result that their faith in God was known not only in Macedonia and Achaia (i.e. all of Greece), but also being known everywhere else. Their faith was well known and they were not ashamed to tell the world not only about their faith but the Christ of their faith.

6. What about us? Would we be considered “contagious” Christians in the same way the Thessalonian church would have been? Would others look at our lives and speech and be inspired to imitate our devotion to Jesus?

7. Take some time to reflect on what we have just read and talked about.
 - a. Summarise 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 in one sentence.

- b. What is one major application in your life today from 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10?

04, 11 October 2026

October Study 2

1 Thessalonians 2:1-3:13

PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): REFLECT

1 Thessalonians 2:1-3:13

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica

2 You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. ² We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. ³ For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. ⁴ On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵ You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. ⁶ We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. ⁷ Instead, we were like young children among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, ⁸ so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. ⁹ Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

¹³ And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. ¹⁴ For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews ¹⁵ who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone ¹⁶ in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

Paul's Longing to See the Thessalonians

¹⁷ But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way. ¹⁹ For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown

Notes and Questions

See Acts 16:16-40.

They did not view manual labour as shameful work although Greeks in general then thought so.

in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

3 So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. ² We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, ³ so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them. ⁴ In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.

Timothy's Encouraging Report

⁶ But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. ⁷ Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. ⁸ For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. ⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Allusion to Zech
14:5b

PREPARE TO SHARE (INDIVIDUAL): LOOK BACK

What has God been teaching you in the last few weeks?

Who has God laid on your heart to pray for?

GROUP: SHARE AND PRAY

Take note of one another's prayer concerns.

Come together to pray for each other, the church, and the world (see this month's prayer bulletin).

GROUP: WORSHIP TOGETHER

Prepare your hearts to meet God and one another in His Word through worshipping together.

GROUP: STUDY 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy make the point that their preaching of the gospel to the Thessalonians was not prompted by their own self-interest but instead prompted by obedience to God and a sincere concern for the Thessalonian believers.

1. How do we know (from this text) that they were not preaching for their own benefit? Consider their response to opposition and their behaviour while with the Thessalonians.
2. Each of us should be ambassadors of the gospel in obedience to the Great Commission, bringing God's Word to others much as Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy did. Are we telling others about the gospel? If we are, what motivates us? If we aren't, what's stopping us?
3. Take a moment to examine your life. When we speak about God to others, do we have the same credibility that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy did? Or do people think that we must have some hidden motives?
4. What do you think it looks like today for us to "live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory"? What does this have to do with the gospel message?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16. The Thessalonian church was facing persecution from their own countrymen instigated by the Jews, much like the Judean churches were facing persecution from their fellow Jews. Their response to the situation (standing firm in their faith) proved that when they received the gospel, they had been transformed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

5. What was remarkable about the Thessalonians' response to persecution? Why would this prove that they received the gospel as God's word?

6. What is the difference between knowing God's word intellectually and knowing God's word internally? Give some examples of what this looks like in our own lives.

7. What does a church that welcomes the word of God as God's word look like, based on what we see in 1 Thess 1-2? Do you think this is a good yardstick, and why?

8. Paul tells us here that when the church experiences persecution, she shares in the suffering not only of the Judean churches and the prophets, but also of Christ. He also notes that those who are persecuting the church will be subject to the wrath of God in the end. In what ways would this have been an encouragement to the Thessalonian church?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:10. Here we see that despite their separation from the Thessalonian church, the three missionaries (Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy) continued to be greatly concerned for the faith of the Thessalonian church. With Timothy's return and report on the continued steadfastness of faith in the persecuted Thessalonian church, their fears were allayed and they rejoiced greatly.

9. What strikes you about the way Paul speaks about the Thessalonian believers? What does this tell you about the way he viewed them?
10. How do we view our fellow believers, to whom we have a responsibility to preach the gospel as Paul did?
11. What was the purpose of sending Timothy to the Thessalonians?
12. Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13. Paul prays for the Thessalonian believers, demonstrating a wish for them to be united (including with him), and for their spiritual growth. Consider what our prayers for each other usually look like. What can we add to our regular prayers for our fellow DG members?
13. Take some time to reflect on what we have just read and talked about.
 - a. Summarise 1 Thessalonians 2-3 in one sentence.
 - b. What is one major application in your life today from 1 Thessalonians 2-3?