

# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## INTRODUCTION | 1 THESSALONIANS

The word “captivated” means to be held by the attention and affection of something; to be locked in because of its beauty and effect. When one is captivated by something, they aren’t simply appreciating the content, they have been affected by it. In short, their attention has been held so deeply that they have been transformed.

The Apostle Paul writes this of the Thessalonians. In what is considered by many scholars to be his first epistle written, Paul commends the Thessalonians on their faith and the impact it has not only had on them, but on the watching world (1:6). For Paul, the Thessalonians were not simply “on board” with the teaching of the gospel of grace, they had been captivated by it.

Paul writes this letter to them and encourages them to not only continue moving forward, but to continue growing outward. The letter to the Thessalonians is filled with encouragement from Paul and his ministry colleagues on discipleship through imitation, friendship, ethics, and continued holiness.

God through Paul is so pleased and encouraged by the faith of the Thessalonians that he pressed their continued sanctification because that is the will of God for them, and in turn us (4:3).

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## WHY 1 THESSALONIANS?

The church in Thessalonica was a young church and they were bearing much fruit in spite of persecution (*Acts 17:1-9*) and Paul is writing to them to encourage their onward sanctification; their pursuit of holiness. In short, Paul is telling them "keep growing!"

This is the kind of impact the gospel has on us personally, but also the kind of impact the gospel should have for us missionally. For the Thessalonians, their captivation of the gospel spilled out into every part of their lives.

For us, the first letter to the Thessalonians will show us not only what a healthy church looks like, but how a healthy church lives. And my hope and prayer is that we would be so captivated by the gospel in our lives personally that it spills out missionally into our family, work life, and our city. My prayer is for McAllen and our surrounding cities to look at our small church and wonder what we're so captivated by, why we live so differently, and how we love so selflessly. My prayer is that we respond with the beauty, glory, and message of God's gospel.

As we walk into 1 Thessalonians, prepare your heart to be thoroughly encouraged by God through Paul, but also know that you will be challenged in your walk with the Lord so that you would know His will and so that you would stand encouraged among your brothers and sisters in Christ.

For His glory,

Pastor Marco

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## DATE AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### Article by Matt Smethurst

After seeing a vision of a Macedonian man urging him to “Come over to Macedonia and help us” (*Acts 16:9*), Paul embarked on a journey to that region with Silas and Timothy, “concluding that God had called [them] to preach the gospel” there (*Acts 16:10*). They traveled first to Philippi (*Acts 16:11–40*) before proceeding to Thessalonica.

Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia, a Roman province in northern Greece. Boasting a population of more than 100,000, the city was a powerful commercial center in the Greco-Roman world. It was strategically located on the coast of the Aegean Sea at a key juncture along the Via Egnatia (a major Roman east-west highway). The city, therefore, attracted a diverse array of people and philosophies. This cosmopolitan makeup shaped its religious climate as well. While primarily polytheistic, Thessalonica included a sizable number of monotheistic Jews.

In *Acts 17:1–11*, Luke recounts Paul’s visit to the city. He entered the local synagogue and on three consecutive Sabbaths “reasoned with them from the Scriptures” and proclaimed Jesus as the Christ (*Acts 17:2–3*). Some of the Thessalonians “were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women” (*Acts 17:4*). Nevertheless, a band of jealous Jews “formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd” (*Acts 17:5*). Unable to find Paul, Silas, or Timothy, they dragged Jason and some others before the authorities and charged them with sedition: “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus” (*Acts 17:6–7*). Narrowly escaping by night, Paul and his associates journeyed west to Berea, where, Luke notes, the Jews were “more noble than those in Thessalonica” (*Acts 17:11*). However, on learning that Paul was in Berea, some of the Thessalonian Jews “came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds” (*Acts 17:13*). Paul again escaped, sailing south to Athens (*Acts 17:16–33*).

Paul’s next destination was Corinth, where he remained for 18 months (*Acts 18:1–18*). Paul wrote to the Thessalonians from Corinth around AD 50–51, on the back end of his second missionary journey. First Thessalonians is probably his earliest New Testament letter after Galatians (c. AD 48).

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## COMMUNITY GROUPS

### What Is A Community Group?

Community Groups are small gatherings of people that meet weekly for friendship, accountability, study and prayer, laughter, and occasionally tears.

Community Groups (CGs) serve as the main vehicle of discipleship and care at Storehouse Community Church. In short, our CGs are a family of disciples making disciples of Jesus in ordinary life.

Each CG is unique and shaped by the people who attend and the city they meet in. And at the heart of each CG is a desire to gather as family and friends, grow in our relationship with Jesus, and go into our cities on mission.

### Why Should I Join A Community Group?

The Bible teaches us that God is relational, personal, and invested which, in turn, means that we are created for friendship and community. It is in community where we flourish through relationship and challenge. CGs are more than a weekly event, but a time to grow and cultivate a relationship with God and others.

### Where Do Community Groups Meet?

CGs are strategically planted throughout McAllen and its surrounding cities in an effort to engage our city and community. Whether meeting at a home, local coffee shop, or college campus, we desire to see every aspect of our cities blessed by God's people.

### How Do I Get Connected?

There are two ways that you can get connected. You can visit our Connect desk on Sunday and our volunteers will help you through the process or you can visit [storehousemcallen.com/community](https://storehousemcallen.com/community) to learn more and sign up!

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## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. [Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Thessalonians by Mark Howell](#)

“This series affirms that the Bible is a Christ-centered book, containing a unified story of redemptive history of which Jesus is the hero. It’s presented as sermons, divided into chapters that conclude with a “Reflect & Discuss” section, making this series ideal for small group study, personal devotion, and even sermon preparation. It’s not academic but rather presents an easy-reading, practical and friendly commentary. ”

2. [Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus by Mark Dever](#)

“Following the pattern found in Scripture, this book explains how disciple-making relationships should function in the context of the local church, teaching us how to cultivate a culture of discipling as a normal part of our everyday lives.”

3. [Gospel Centered Discipleship by Jonathan Dodson](#)

“In Gospel-Centered Discipleship, Jonathan Dodson presents an effective, Spirit-led model for sanctification. Reminding readers that real discipleship is imperfect yet transformational, Dodson encourages Christians to engage more authentically with others as they grow in faith. Drawing from his own failures and successes while following Jesus, Dodson defines discipleship, describes the heart of a disciple, and gives practical guidance for mentor and peer-based discipleship as Jesus intended.”

4. [The Radical Book for Kids: Exploring the Roots and Shoots of Faith by Champ Thornton](#)

“*The Radical Book for Kids* is a fun-filled explorer’s guide to the Bible, church history, and life for boys and girls ages eight and up. This remarkable book is a fun, informative, and spiritually edifying resource. Along with the many fun and exciting stories of historical figures, young and old readers alike will learn about the roots of our faith and the importance of the gospel in our lives.”

5. [Press Pause: The Under 10-Minute Family Worship Podcast](#)

“*Press Pause* is the under-ten-minute family devotional podcast that will help you teach your kids big truths about Jesus and the Christian faith. Listen along, and we’ll give you several opportunities to press pause, ask questions, and have conversations with your kids. This is a time when you can grow together in your faith and get to know each other a little more. Each week you’ll have a new *big truth* to walk through together with your kids. All you need is a phone and a small chunk of time. Press pause over dinner, while you’re waiting for that carpool line to move, or when bedtime rolls around.”

# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK ONE

ACTS 17:1-9 & 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ The church in Thessalonica was a young church. Paul's letter to them is rich with encouragement in the areas of discipleship and holiness. One of the ways Paul unpacks discipleship is through imitation (1:6). How is imitation and discipleship connected?
- ∴ Paul encourages the Thessalonians to pursue holiness as they follow Jesus (3:13). To be holy is to be set apart – in what ways is holiness captivating to nonbelievers? How is this evident in your life?
- ∴ Confession: Discipleship for the Thessalonians came as a result of Paul and his colleagues giving their lives to the Thessalonians (2:8). Discipleship is costly – it costs our comfort for the sake of others' growth in maturity and holiness. Confess any sin or hindrances that has kept you from investing in other brothers or sisters. The gospel teaches that grace not only sanctifies, but empowers us to make disciples. How can you grow in this area?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | DISCUSSION & PRAYER

- ∴ In any struggle that your child faces (e.g. anger, discouragement, fear, unanswered prayers for healing), there is a great opportunity to talk with them about those struggles together. Children may ask you: Why does God let struggle and suffering happen? (See *Romans 5:12*). What comfort and hope do we see in Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection? (See *Rom 5:18-21*).
- ∴ Lead by example by praying out loud through the Psalms (like *Psalms 22*, which points to how Christ suffered). Ask God to help you and your child understand Jesus is worth following and trusting because Jesus endured all to complete God's plan of redemption.

# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK TWO

1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-10

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ Paul was deeply affectionate toward the Thessalonians – thanking God for them in his prayers. How does prayer affect or shape the way we see/love one another?
- ∴ In *verses 3-4*, Paul writes on motives. Why is it critical to please God and not people? And how does living for God bring freedom? Be specific.
- ∴ Read *verse three* carefully. This is three parts: What are “works” and how do they produce faith? What is “labor” and how is it affected by love? Why does hope build endurance?
- ∴ In *verses 6-8*, Paul writes of discipleship in terms of imitation. Consider your own life for a moment – is there a difference between what Christians and unbelievers think of you? Is your faith modeled in every aspect of your life?
- ∴ Read *verses 7-9*. The impact that the gospel had on the Thessalonians was captivating to others in their community and surrounding cities. How do we allow the gospel to create that kind of an impact in our lives this semester?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | SINGING TOGETHER

- ∴ Sing Together: [Psalm 33:20-22 - We Hope In You](#) by Seeds Family Worship

*Isaiah 30:18* Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you,  
and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you.  
For the Lord is a God of justice;  
blessed are all those who wait for him.

# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK THREE

1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-10

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ In *verses 4-6*, Paul centers everything around their love for God and God alone. This is what shapes their hearts, their ultimate motive is their love for Jesus. Where is God testing your heart right now in this season?
- ∴ Paul writes that they gave their own selves to the Thessalonians. This tells us that discipleship is not only formal instruction. What would it look like for your group to take discipleship to this level? Is there hesitation? If so, why?
- ∴ If we do not make or mature disciples of Jesus, the culture will. Where is discipleship taking place in your life? Who are you discipling?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | DISCUSSION

- ∴ Think back to when you were younger. What did you show affection to? What are some things that you show affection to now and how do you show it?
- ∴ What are the two things that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy “imparted” or gave to the church at the Thessalonica? What was the reason why they imparted those things?
- ∴ Who can you show God’s affection to this week? (example: encourage a fellow classmate; ask how you can help each other at home and commit to doing it humbly.)



# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK FOUR

1 THESSALONIANS 2:9-16

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ Paul tells the Thessalonians that while he was with them, he “proclaimed to [them] the gospel of God” (*1 Thessalonians 2:9*). In your own words, what is the Gospel?
- ∴ Early in the passage, Paul uses words such as “exhorted” and “encouraged” to speak of the intentional relationship he had with the Thessalonians (*1 Thessalonians 2:12*). In what ways have you been discipled within the community of the Church? In what ways have you discipled those around you?
- ∴ In the fast moving pace of life, it can be easy to feel discouraged at our own spiritual growth. One of the reasons for feeling this way can be that we don't take time and reflect. Take this time now and read *1 Thessalonians 2:13*. How do you see God's Word at work in your life?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

- ∴ Practice telling the gospel of God to each other each day, clearly and accurately. You can start out simple (Jesus came to save sinners), and build up to find scripture references God's salvific plan for His chosen ones. Here's a great resource, *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* from The Gospel Project to review together at home after dinner, at bedtime, or before leaving the house in the mornings.

# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK FIVE

1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-3:5

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ Based on this passage, in what ways could the example of Paul's depth of love and concern for the Thessalonians shape the relationships we have with each other?
- ∴ To what extent does Paul seem to view opposition as part of normal Christian life (*1 Thessalonians 3:3-4*)? How should we approach opposition?
- ∴ It was no small sacrifice for the Apostle Paul to send his faithful co-worker Timothy back to Thessalonica, leaving himself to minister alone in Athens (*2:19-3:2*). In what ways have you been willing to sacrifice or be inconvenienced for the spiritual well-being of others?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | ACTIVITY & MEMORIZATION

- ∴ Pray and ask God who in Storehouse Community Church could use some encouragement this week? Have your parents help you if you need help to write a letter or a card, and give it to that person next week. Or even cook a meal together with another family at your house. See how you can make this a weekly and/or monthly rhythm of God's grace to be displayed through you, so that we grow in building up fellow disciples of Jesus.
- ∴ Memory Verse: "For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy." *1 Thessalonians 2:19-20*

# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK SIX

1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-13

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ Paul cites the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints as a motivation for the Thessalonians to continue loving one another and to see their hearts established in blamelessness and holiness (v13). In what ways has the reality of Christ's second coming affected your life practically?
- ∴ Take some time and look at some of Paul's prayers (*Phillippians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:9-14*). How do they compare with what Paul prays for in *1 Thessalonians 3:11-13*?
- ∴ Paul thanked God for, and took great joy in, the spiritual growth of the Thessalonians (3:9). Do you have people in your life whom you long to see grow spiritually? What are you doing to help them?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | SINGING, DISCUSSION, & PRAYER

- ∴ Sing Together: O How Good to Be Together by The Wood Drake Sessions
- ∴ Paul and Timothy wanted the Thessalonians to keep helping the Thessalonians understand all that Jesus taught. What questions have you had about God lately? What doesn't make sense right now to you about the person of Jesus? Write down those questions or thoughts and ask your parents to pray with you, asking God to help your hearts and minds grow in His ways.

# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK SEVEN

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ Considering that it is God’s will that we increase in holiness (sanctification, v3); that we control our bodies in holiness and honor (v4); that we’ve been called to holiness (v7); and that we are to live in submission to the Holy Spirit (v8), it is obviously very important that we understand what holiness is. How would you define this holiness to which God has called us?
- ∴ What are some of the ways in which participating in sexual immorality can be harmful?
- ∴ If one is to abstain from sexual immorality, one must learn to control his own body in holiness and honor (v4). This type of self-control is necessary for every believer and applies to many areas of life (*1 Corinthians 9:25-27; Colossians 3:5; 2 Peter 1:5-6*). What are some areas in which you struggle with self-control? In what areas have you learned self-control since you’ve become a Christian?
- ∴ Why might it be a good practice to exercise self-control even in areas which may not be sinful? What are some areas of self-indulgence which are often overlooked by Christians but should be considered when exercising self-control?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | ACTIVITY

- ∴ Family Activity on Holiness: Get several random objects to play “One of These Things is Not Like the Other.” Put the items together in groups of four. Three items should go together, and one won’t belong. For example, you could have a plate, fork, napkin, and Lego. Which one doesn’t belong? The Lego, of course. The rest are used when eating a meal. Separate the Lego from the other items. Having holiness means being set apart. You look and act differently because of God’s holiness. Only he makes our hearts new; a new heart shows a changed way of living because of Him who we believe made us new. (*Review 1 Peter 1:15-16 and 2 Timothy 1:9 together*).

# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK EIGHT

1 THESSALONIANS 4:9-12

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ Paul tells the Thessalonians to “love one another...more and more” (*1 Thessalonians 4:9-10*). What are some intentional ways that you can show this type of brotherly love amongst believers? How often do you do those things?
- ∴ In a time where people make their life public on social media, what does it mean to “live a quiet life” (*1 Thessalonians 4:11*)? Why is that important as Christians?
- ∴ Though we should certainly show brotherly love in our tangible actions, one of the best things we can do is pray for one another. Take some time right now and pray for a fellow brother/sister in Christ and their families.

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | DISCUSSION

- ∴ What responsibilities do you have in your house? At school? What are some responsibilities we have as God’s children and in the local body of Christ, Storehouse Community? Encourage each other to ‘aspire’ to live each day rooted in God’s grace, peace, and love.

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## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK NINE

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ Paul reassures the Thessalonian believers of the hope found in Christ and to not grieve “as others do who have no hope” (*verse 13*). What area in your life are you not placing your hope in Christ? How might these words help you redirect your heart to the promised hope in Jesus?
- ∴ In *verse 18*, Paul ends with, “Therefore encourage one another with these words.” What are some active ways we can encourage one another as we await the return of Christ?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | MEMORIZATION

- ∴ Memory Verse: “Look, he is coming in the clouds, and every eye will see him.” Revelation 1:7 NIV
- ∴ Review *John 14:1-3*, *Revelation 21:3-4*, and *Psalms 16:11* together with this week’s passage in 1 Thessalonians. Take time to explain/remind them of:
  - God’s wonderful gift of grace that offers us salvation because of Jesus’ death and resurrection.
  - Being in God’s family means we will live with Him forever when Jesus comes again.
  - Receiving His love for us, that was demonstrated through Jesus, assures us of His love lasting throughout eternity.

# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK TEN

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ Read *Ephesians 6:10-17*. How do these words encourage you to be strong in the Lord and persevere as we face spiritual warfare?
- ∴ Verse 6 tells us to “keep awake and be sober.” What are some practical ways to “keep awake” in our spiritual lives? What does it look like for you to actively pursue Christ?
- ∴ Throughout 1 Thessalonians, Paul reminds the Thessalonian believers to encourage one another. Why is it significant for us to build each other up in the faith? How might these words challenge you to encourage other believers within your community or community group?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | SING TOGETHER

- ∴ Sing Together: [John 8:12 The Light of the World](#) and [1 John 1:5-7 God is Light](#) by Seeds Family Worship

# 1 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



## DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK ELEVEN

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-18

### DISCUSSION

- ∴ In *verse 14*, Paul urges the Thessalonians to “admonish the idle.” Are there particular areas in your life where you remain idle? Why do you think this is? How might God be calling you to repent and live more wisely in these areas?
- ∴ Paul reminds us to “give thanks in all circumstances.” Do circumstances often dictate your gratitude? What would it look like for you to cultivate a thankful heart?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | ACTIVITY

- ∴ Read *1 Thessalonians 5:18* and ask throughout the week: Why would believing in Jesus be a reason to thank God? Why do you think God wants us to thank Him? God asks us to always give thanks. What if you don’t feel like giving thanks? Can you give thanks without feeling grateful? What does being grateful in the good and the bad and the ugly show others about God?
- ∴ **Thank-You Chain**  
Use construction paper strips for each parent and children to write down or draw something to give thanks to God at the start and/or end of each day. Attach the links with tape for each family member or make one long chain for the entire family. By the end of the week, you review all that you had given thanks to God for.