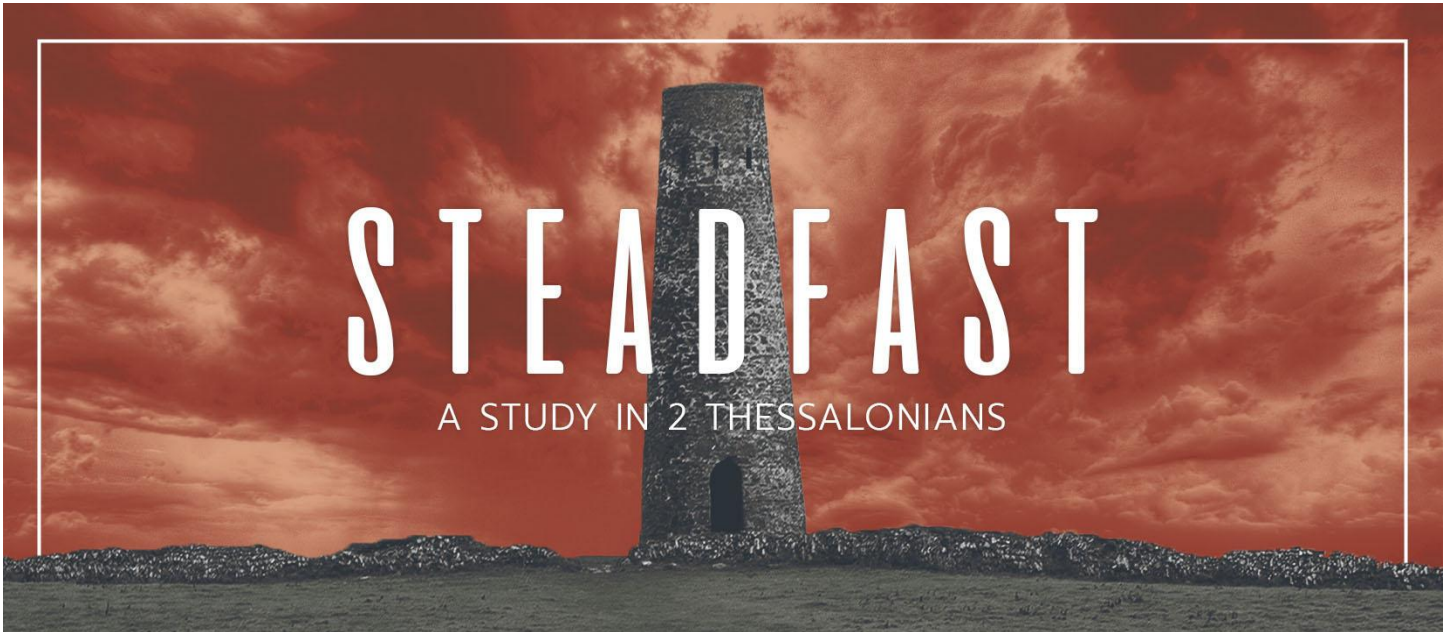


2 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



INTRODUCTION | 2 THESSALONIANS

In what was more than likely written only a few months after 1 Thessalonians, the second letter to the Thessalonians presses the young church upon the significance concerning the last things with practical realities. In other words, when we, as Christians, consider our future it shapes how we live in the present.

For a moment, think about goal setting. One of the strategies used to ensure achievement of goals is called "reverse engineering" where one considers working backwards by establishing smaller daily goals in order to accomplish their ultimate goal in the future. If an individual wants to build muscle over the next several months, they must consider what their diet and exercise routine will look like in the present. If a family wants to take a vacation, then the way budgets are worked in the present shapes how they draw closer to their adventure in the future.

In short, what we believe about the future shapes how we live in the present and this is why the Apostle Paul writes to the Thessalonians a second time. In his first letter, one of his main objectives was to provide them with encouragement through comfort given all that they were experiencing. In second Thessalonians, the Apostle learns that many of the things he's already written to them about have gone unchanged, unresolved, and confusion still lingers among the church. Therefore, he writes to encourage them through correction this time. In an exchange of strong exhortation and warm encouragement, Paul presses them with the coming of the last days in order that their daily lives in the present would be shaped by steadfastness.

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WHY 2 THESSALONIANS?

Second Thessalonians builds on many of the themes Paul introduced in his first letter to the Thessalonians such as the return of Christ and the day of the Lord. For many in our congregation, the study of the last things or eschatology, is still an area of confusion and fear as a tragic result of poor handling and misuse of Scripture from previous church and/or leadership experiences. The return of Christ should bring about expectation and eagerness for the Christian because our future glory is marked with the presence of Jesus while at the same time a great sense of spiritual urgency to proclaim the goodness of Christ to an unbelieving world today.

In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul helps to provide clarity on the last things while pressing urgency on present matters, namely our sanctification in Christ.

My hope and prayer throughout our time in second Thessalonians is that our future hope for glory in the return of Christ would shape our godliness in our present day so that we may remain steadfast in our conviction and conduct.

For His glory,

Pastor Marco De Leon

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DATE AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Article published by Crossway

The Thessalonian church had accepted the strange claim that “the day of the Lord has come” (2 *Thess.* 2:1–2). How could they have thought this? Some think they spiritualized the concept of the day of the Lord, but Paul’s argumentation seems inconsistent with this. Others postulate that they thought that tribulation was part of the day of the Lord and that it had begun, and consequently the second coming was imminent. However, Paul assumes that they knew the second coming occurred at the same time as the coming of the day of the Lord. As strange as it may seem, the Thessalonians may simply have fallen victim to the bizarre notion that the day of the Lord, understood in its normal sense, had come. As a result they were shaken and frightened (2 *Thess.* 2:2). The Thessalonians were also undergoing persecution (2 *Thess.* 1:4), which may have exacerbated their confusion about the end. Furthermore, the community had a problem with idlers refusing to work (2 *Thess.* 3:6–15). They may have stopped working to await and preach the second coming, but evidence for connecting the problems in this way is lacking. Lazy Christians may simply have been exploiting wealthier Christians’ generosity in order to avoid work.

Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians (1) to reassure those terrified by the thought that the day of the Lord had come (2 *Thess.* 2:1–3:5), (2) to strengthen the Thessalonians in the face of unremitting persecution (2 *Thess.* 1:3–12), and (3) to deal with the problem of some of the church members refusing to earn their own living (2 *Thess.* 3:6–15).

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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 to learn more and sign up!

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. [2 Thessalonians: A Commentary by David Chapman \(free online resource\)](#)
2. [The Message of 1 & 2 Thessalonians \(commentary\) by John Stott](#)

“With scholarly rigor and pastoral care, John Stott opens up the rich truths found in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. He guides readers through each passage, exploring historical background, key themes, and applications for today. In 1 Thessalonians Stott highlights the themes of the relationship between the gospel and the church, and in 2 Thessalonians he identifies a Christian perspective on history. Both letters provide valuable insights into Paul's model of ministry and the life of a congregation in a highly challenging context.”

Kids Resources

1. [2 Thessalonians 2](#) - Anticipate time talking about people who will come and try to trick people by sounding like Jesus, but not actually following the Bible, by using this Lord's Prayer activity with your children to distinguish four “falsely” translated versions that appear right compared to what Jesus actually says and means. Each one was wrongly translated for a specific purpose. May this be a step forward in your own application of standing firm in the faith and word of God, as a response to the work of Christ in you. *Source overview link [here](#).*
2. [Wherever You Go, I Want to Know](#) - As children embark on life's journey with all their potential and aspirations, use this beautifully illustrated, rhyming storybook to tell them your biggest dream - that whatever they do and wherever they go, they will love and follow Jesus. This keepsake edition includes 16 illustrated pages for writing messages and pasting in photos, plus a pocket for keepsakes in the back. The robust slipcase means you will keep these memories safe for the long term. It's ideal for a child to take with them all the way up through school, with each successive teacher adding their own comments and encouragement.

2 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

STEADFAST

A STUDY IN 2 THESSALONIANS

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK ONE

2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-4

DISCUSSION

- ∴ Paul opens up his letter with thankfulness towards his Thessalonian brothers and sisters for their increasing faith in the midst of their suffering. What are some ways you have been encouraged by someone else's faith? How did their faith point you to God?
- ∴ How do we remain steadfast in the face of persecution and afflictions? How do we keep the faith while enduring suffering?
- ∴ What are some ways our love for one another can grow?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ∴ Reflect: How beautiful to bless others first with grace and peace from the One who is able to bestow them as Paul does in the first two verses. Whether the subsequent information is encouraging or admonishing, he first begins with grace and peace. How could good situations be made better, or difficult situations be made more bearable, if we first bless others with grace and peace from the Lord? Act: Bless each other with grace and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ∴ Discuss: What ways do you see each other standing firm in their faith or through suffering? Tell one another how you notice them and then thank God through prayer.
- ∴ Sing Together - [Be On Your Guard - Sing the Bible, Slugs & Bugs Vol. 4 \(1 Corinthians 16:13-14, Psalm 27:14\)](#)

2 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

STEADFAST

A STUDY IN 2 THESSALONIANS

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK TWO

2 THESSALONIANS 1:5-12

DISCUSSION

- ∴ What does it mean to be “considered worthy of the kingdom of God” in *verse 5*? How are we made worthy of his calling?
- ∴ In *verse 7*, Paul says God will “grant relief to you who are afflicted” upon Christ’s return. How does this verse provide comfort and allow us to face future afflictions?
- ∴ Paul is pretty descriptive about God’s judgment in *verses 6-10*. What makes the Christian different?
- ∴ What are your initial reactions when we begin talking about God’s judgment? What do our initial reactions about God’s judgment reveal about what we think of sin?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ∴ Discuss Together - In *verses 5-8*, Paul explains that God will repay righteous judgment to those who know God and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, and on those who don’t. Relief would come to those who are suffering for God and vengeance would be inflicted on those who are separate. What kind of justice do we imagine for those who persecute us? Do we wait on the Lord, or take matters into our own hands?
- ∴ Family Activity - gather pencils and paper, enough for each member of your family. Think of a situation or person that you are holding onto with closed hands, desiring to handle on your own. Write them down on a slip of paper. After you are finished, take turns crumpling up the paper and throwing them into a basket as you ‘give them to God.’ Focus on standing firm in His love and strength.
- ∴ Praise & Prayer - Lord, we first praise YOU! We thank you for your righteous judgment and grace. There is no other one who is holy and mighty. Please forgive us when we do not wait on you in patience and grace, especially when we want to handle matters on our terms. Holy Spirit, show us how to live worthy of our calling as Jesus did. Amen.

2 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

STEADFAST

A STUDY IN 2 THESSALONIANS

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK THREE

2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12

DISCUSSION

- ∴ Why can eschatology be so hard to understand? Why is it often either neglected or abused?
- ∴ What (or who) did you think was the antichrist and the man of lawlessness? What is the spirit of antichrist, and how does it manifest itself in the world today?
- ∴ How often do you think about the second coming of Christ? Why do we normally not think about it that much? How can we cultivate the hope of Christ's return in our daily lives?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ∴ Activity - When Paul talks about the man of lawlessness - we need to see it in the context of the final ending of all that has been against God's good will, work, and ways. Recall or write a story about a favorite superhero or noble character, noting the tension needing to be solved or how a villain that was finally defeated after so much struggle for the hero/heroine. Was there a hopeful ending in those superhero stories? When/how did those heroes give in to the villain's tactics or give up on their fight? When is it the easiest to forget (or hardest to believe) Jesus is our hero?
- ∴ SEARCH TOGETHER - How will the man of lawlessness be defeated by Jesus? What verses teach that God is sovereign over everything? How is this a comfort to believers like you and me going through difficult times? We can remember the greatest truth by looking at God's Word for His awesome and glorious ending, which includes all who belong to and follow Him.

2 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

STEADFAST

A STUDY IN 2 THESSALONIANS

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK FOUR

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13-15

DISCUSSION

- ∴ In what ways have you seen God (1) mortifying (killing) your old sinful nature and (2) quickening (making alive) your new nature in Christ? How are you actively cultivating communion with Him?
- ∴ In what ways are you expecting too much from your heart? What is the remedy for this?
- ∴ In what ways can your community group or discipleship encourage you to make fresh applications to Christ?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ∴ Reflection - Paul tells the church of Thessalonica that "God chose [them] as the firstfruits to be saved". (Help explain what "firstfruit" means). This tells us that the Thessalonians are the firstfruits of the new and transformed Thessalonica by Jesus's life, death, and resurrection. How does our life show we are so changed by the gospel that others around us can see the death and resurrection of Jesus in us? (v.13-14)
- ∴ Search Together - What other parts of scripture exhort and encourage us to stand firm and to not be quickly shaken? Read *1 Corinthians 16:13* (another letter from Paul to the church in Corinth). How does this exhortation compare to the one in *2 Thessalonians 2:15*? How can this help you stand firm in Jesus around friends at school, class or teammates, or family members?
- ∴ Sing Together - [Stand Firm](#) and [Our Struggle](#) reminding each other to stand firm and put on the full armor of God, so that we are not quickly shaken.

2 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

STEADFAST

A STUDY IN 2 THESSALONIANS

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK FIVE

2 THESSALONIANS 2:16-17

DISCUSSION

- ∴ Scripture is clear that life is hard for everyone (although to different degrees and at different times). How does this perspective challenge your own expectations of life?
- ∴ Instead of believing that bad things “just happen” to us, we are encouraged to see that we are called to a hard life. How can realizing God’s calling on your life impact how you respond in hard times?
- ∴ Paul prays for hearts to be changed instead of circumstances to be changed. How is God working on your heart through your current circumstances?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ∴ Memory Verse - *2 Thessalonians 3:5* “May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.”
- ∴ Activity - Jesus and the Father loved us while we were sinners (*Romans 5:8*) and still love us. Nothing can separate us from this love (*Romans 8:38-39*). God gave the Thessalonians comfort that outlasts this life and extends for eternity, and he did so because of his love. Younger children: Make a heart and write down in the middle “Jesus loves me”. Older children: Write out the passages above from Romans and our memory verse this week on your favorite craft paper or paint them on canvas. Place your finished hearts, paper craft, or canvases somewhere where you can be reminded daily that there is no greater love than the love of Jesus and that absolutely nothing can separate us from his love.

2 THESSALONIANS | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

STEADFAST

A STUDY IN 2 THESSALONIANS

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK SIX

2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-5

DISCUSSION

- ∴ When looking at *verses 3-4* we find a balance between God's role in our sanctification and our responsibility. On one hand, God is faithful to establish us in the faith and guard us against evil. On the other hand, we are responsible to obey what we find in scripture.
 1. How does God's role in your sanctification encourage you to fulfill your responsibility to live in obedience to him?
 2. How can an understanding of this balance prevent you from becoming too self-righteous in your sanctification?
- ∴ Although the Thessalonians were experiencing persecution and affliction (*1:4-5*), Paul does not hesitate to issue commands regarding proper Christian character and behavior (*3:6,10,12,14*). Do you find this insensitive or unnecessary? Why or why not?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ∴ Memory verse - *2 Thessalonians 3:3* "The Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one." (link with sign language in NIV translation).
- ∴ Search Together - Read *John 17:15* and *Matthew 6:13*. How do these verses help shape how you and I can pray to resist temptation and live obediently as Jesus prayed for all who believe in Him (and continues to as he sits at God's right hand)? Set time aside each day this week to pray for fellow believers of Christ so that they trust in God and walk in His righteousness versus falling into temptation and being deceived by the evil one.
- ∴ Sing together - [God is Faithful](#) - we sing to not only remember who God is, but also to remove our daily doubt and fear with the truth of what God has done for us in his great love.

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STEADFAST

A STUDY IN 2 THESSALONIANS

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK SEVEN

2 THESSALONIANS 3:6-15

DISCUSSION

- ∴ Paul's command regarding the lazy brother required the members of the church to play a role in church discipline. Why do you think it is important for church members to understand that they have this responsibility? For churches that exercise church discipline, what types of issues do you think they would consider worthy of such actions?
- ∴ In *verse 9*, Paul explains that he and his companions had every right to expect the church to support them financially as they ministered to them spiritually. Yet, he did not avail himself to this right, for their sakes. In what areas have you decided to forgo your rights for the sake of others?
- ∴ One of the problems with the brothers who refused to work is that, in their idleness they became busybodies (*cf. 1 Thess 4:11; 1 Tim 5:13; 1 Pet 4:15*). They would gossip and get in other people's business. In what ways do you believe being a busybody might be damaging to a church?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ∴ Discuss - What is idleness? When and how does idleness seem to take over in your mind, heart, and actions? How has God shown you how to be productive for His honor?
- ∴ Define "work". What do students think it means to do work, and why is it important? Does work mean things that we do for pay, or things that we "must" do to fulfill obligation? Invite some sharing of ideas about what work is and see how it matches or compares with how Paul explains toiling, hardship, and work.
- ∴ Activity – Idle or Industrious? Invite one or two students up to act out a charade of sorts. Whisper or write down whether they will be acting lazy or productive. Then give a scenario and have the student(s) act how they think they would in that situation. For example, "Mom says to clean your room" could be met with obedience or obstinacy. Have other students guess which way is being demonstrated.

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STEADFAST

A STUDY IN 2 THESSALONIANS

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK EIGHT

2 THESSALONIANS 3:16-18

DISCUSSION

- ∴ In light of the two difficult subjects previously covered in this chapter (persecution and church discipline), what is Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians (3:16)? How does this relate to those difficult subjects covered?
- ∴ Why is it important that Paul wanted to make it known that he wrote this letter?
- ∴ There seems to be repetition in *verses 16 and 18*. What is that repetition? Do you think there is a purpose for that? What does this say about Paul's heart for the church he's writing to?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ∴ Search together – Who can provide spiritual peace even in the worst of situations and fears? (*Philippians 4:7, 2 Thess. 3:16, Rom. 16:20, Heb. 13:20*)
- ∴ Discuss - How is *2 Thess. 3:16* similar to Jesus' encouragement in *John 14:27*?
- ∴ Prayer: Father God, thank you for your peace and grace shown through your Son, Jesus. I confess that my fearful heart, distracted mind, and busybody behavior has been more consuming than being your word of truth and life. I look to you Lord, for forgiveness through Jesus because he paid for all my guilt and sin at the cross, and conquered death by being raised on the 3rd day by your Spirit. I praise you for helping me stand firm in your grace and peace, so that I may trust in your steadfast love day by day. Amen.