

Dig Deeper / Sermon Text: 1 Thessalonians 3
Otisville Church of Christ
December 2, 2012

Study and application questions are on the back of this sheet.

Here is a link to an article that provides some background on 1 Thessalonians:
http://executableoutlines.com/1th/1th_00.htm

For those without easy access to the internet, here is a paragraph from that article that details the purpose of 1 Thessalonians:

PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE: The abrupt departure from Thessalonica so soon after the beginning of the church naturally left Paul anxious about the condition of the brethren. When Timothy joined Paul at Athens (cf. [Ac 17:14-16](#)), his concern prompted Paul to send Timothy at once back to Thessalonica to encourage and ground the new disciples in the faith, and to learn how they were enduring persecution (cf. [3:1-5](#)).

When Timothy returned to Paul in Corinth (cf. [Ac 18:5](#)), the news was mostly encouraging (cf. [3:6-7](#)). Despite persecution they had remained strong ([2:13-16](#)), and even proved themselves to be an example to others ([1:6-8](#)). Yet, as with any young church, they needed further instruction concerning holy living (cf. [4:1-12](#)). They also needed to be reassured that their loved ones who died in Christ would not miss out on the blessings involving the coming of our Lord (cf. [4:13-18](#)). Therefore we can summarize by saying that Paul's purpose in writing was:

- * **To praise them for their steadfastness under persecution**
- * **To instruct them concerning holy living**
- * **To correct any misunderstanding, especially about the second coming of Christ**

THEME OF THE EPISTLE: This book is unique in that every chapter ends with a reference to the second coming of Christ ([1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23](#)). With his emphasis on steadfastness and holy living, an appropriate theme might be:

"HOLINESS IN VIEW OF THE COMING OF CHRIST"

Study Questions (Read 1 Thessalonians)

1. What are some of the major themes in 1 Thessalonians?
2. In 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13, Paul prays for the believers that their love for one another would increase and that their holiness before God would be better established. How does Paul illustrate these themes from his own life and ministry among them? (chapters 2 and 3)
3. Why does Paul give thanks for these believers in 1:2-10? How are these themes developed in the rest of the letter?
4. How does Paul describe his ministry among them in both motherly and fatherly terms? How can you take these ideas and build them into your own spiritual care for others?
5. In 3:6-10, what does Paul say about how they were comforted in their distress and affliction? What does he long for? Why?
6. What do you learn from this letter, and from chapters 2 and 3 specifically, about Christian love for one another? What do you need to learn more? How do you need to love and care for others differently than you do now?

Application Ideas

1. Make a list of Christians you regularly spend time with. Think of one way that you can encourage each of them in their faith over the next week.
2. Make a list of Christians who come to mind but that you don't spend a lot of time with. Pick one or two, and decide how you can try to encourage them in their faith?
3. Read 1 Thessalonians three or four times this week. What themes do you see? What do you learn?