



evchurch.info

HOLD THE LINE

1 THESSALONIANS  solid hope - Jesus

Term 3, 2010

Daily Reading Notes

1 Thessalonians

(Hold the line)

Week	Passage
1	Acts 17:1-15
2	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
3	1 Thessalonians 2:1-12
4	1 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5
5	1 Thessalonians 3:6-13
6	1 Thessalonians 4:1-12
7	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
8	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
9	1 Thessalonians 5:12-22
10	1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

We want to encourage each other to be on mission to our non-Christian friends, family and contacts.

Who are you on mission to?

Make a list and start praying for them (and yourself).

Pray for 3 friends, once a week, for 1 minute (3-1-1).

List the name of your family/friends here.

The Geneva Push

Geneva has been set up to provide a means by which we can pool our energies to fuel a whole new generation of Church planting that might see thousands of Australians saved to know Jesus. Geneva is seeking to achieve this outcome by communicating the vision and need of planting so more and more young people think to give themselves to planting. It then has set in place a high quality assessment process to find the best guys, and it then provides ongoing support and training through coaching structures, mentoring and ongoing conferences to best ensure planters have the biggest impact they can as planters. Investing financially into Geneva will serve to create a whole new generation of vibrant churches across the country.
www.thegenevapush.com

The New Testament teaches us to give generously, regularly and joyfully. Please join with us in bringing solid hope to the coast - Jesus.

Details for direct deposit or scheduled payment:

Central Coast Evangelical Church
BSB 704 922 ACC # 100006281

Please label your giving for your congregation. Label with one of the following:

“for Breakfast EV”
“for Sunday EV”
“for Saturday EV”
“for Night EV”

For tax deductible giving to our new church building, please use the following account details:

CBA BSB 062-668 ACC # 10197907

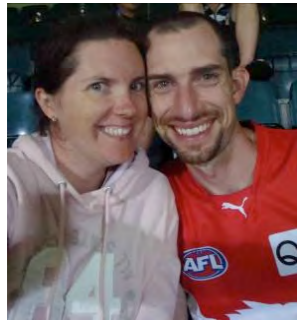
If you require a receipt put your name and SBF (School Building Fund) as your reference on the direct debit please.



MISSION PARTNERS

EV is committed to the proclamation of the gospel all over the world. For your and your group's prayers, here are some of NiteEV's Mission Partners.

Martin & Jen Shadwick (AFES Newcastle Uni)



Martin and Jen are both graduates of our EV MTS program. Martin is now working with AFES as a staff worker at Newcastle Uni, discipling, evangelising and training Christian students. Jen works half the week in the same Uni ministry with women on campus and half the week in children's ministry at the Hunter Bible Church. Although well supported by EV they are currently short of their total required funding.

**Chris and Sharon Ekins
(Coast Evangelical Church, Forster)**



Chris and Sharon moved up to Forster to begin a church there in early 2009. They were convicted of the great need up there for more Bible teaching churches, especially ones that are accessible to those with little or no church background. Praise God that they now have about 30 adults and 10 kids who call Coast EC home, and they are just about to start a second

home group. Pray that God would continue to grow His church and save many, as they pray, invest in relationships, share the gospel, and teach the Bible. Check out www.coastec.net.au/category/prayer/ for more.

Begins Thursday August 12th

Life
to the full

looking into life with Jesus

5 wednesday nights starting 11th aug 7:30pm
brando's cafe, fountain plaza erina

1 Thessalonians guide

How to use this book:

1. Personal Reading

- Use this guide to help you read your Bible every day.
- Scribble down your thoughts and questions each day and remember to pray and ask God to speak to you by His Spirit, through His Word.

2. Growth Groups

- Take this guide with you to your growth group each week so you can write down prayer points that come from the study that week and prayer requests from the members of your group.
- Let your group know who you are on mission to.

3. Church

- Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church.
- Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided.

Christian Leaders Training College, Papua New Guinea

Please pray for John Hitchen (a former principal of CLTC) and Ann Hitchen who are in their final stages of preparations to come to the College. Please pray for John as he comes to teach subjects in the Masters Course, that God will use him to stimulate the students to grow both spiritually and intellectually. Please pray for their travel and in particular for Ann's health as she supports her husband in his ministry.

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secular country, with fewer than 1% being Christian. Paul and Sandra long to see French students commit to full time bible ministry in order to grow Christ's kingdom in France. Pray to this end.

Email: prayerpoints@cms.org.au for more info.

Colin and Jill Bakon (Loja, Ecuador)



Colin and Jill, with their sons Matthew and Nicholas, began ministry in Ecuador in July 1996. Ecuador is a South American country with a strong history of Roman Catholicism. Less than 0.1% of their city, Loja, is Christian, while evangelical groups are viewed with suspicion. Colin and Jill have undertaken teaching English as a second language, and involvement in the running of a cafe as strategies to engage people with a view to introducing them to the Lord Jesus. They are also involved in supporting local church leaders. Pray that the Bakons and their team will effectively reach people in Loja with the gospel.

Email: sim.australia@sim.org.au for more info.

Derek and Anna (Southeast Asia) – 10.30am

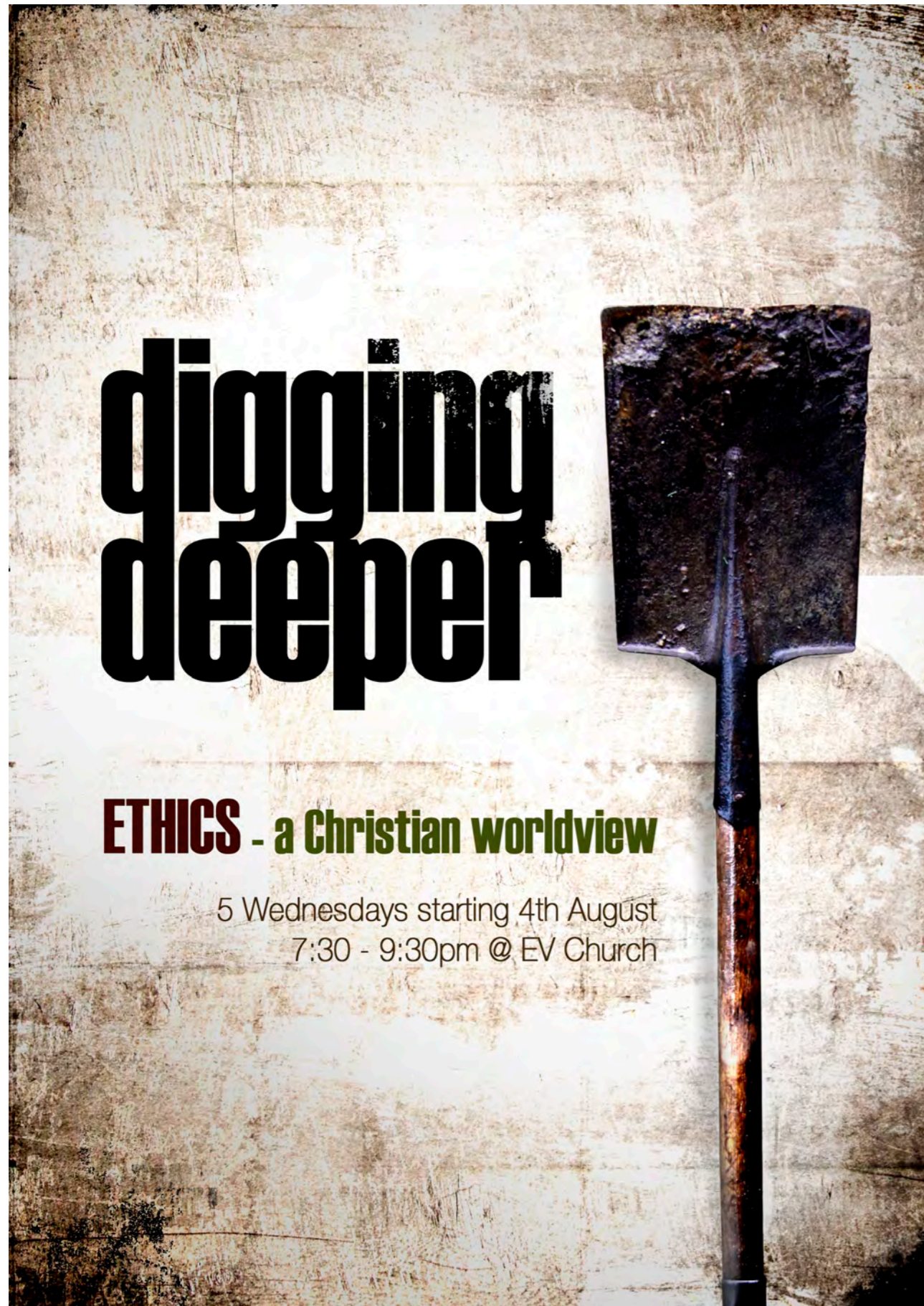
Derek and Anna (with baby Liam) have come from one of our sister churches in Canberra-Crossroads where Anna did MTS. They are preparing to head to Southeast Asia. After initial language and culture learning, they will be teaching in a Bible college, training and equipping local believers.

Overseas Council Australia (OCA)

OCA is a mission agency that provides funds to theological colleges in developing countries so that more leaders are available for the church in those countries. OCA provides a unique way for Christians in Australia to contribute to the upcoming leaders of the church in the developing world.

These young men and women will lead churches, evangelise, and plant new churches in their own countries. Unlike Western missionaries they already know the language and culture. Your investment in them will last for thirty or forty years as they minister through their work life.





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Matt and Cecily Greenwood (Western Suburbs Community Bible Church- Perth)



Matt and Cec (along with 4 children) planted WSCBC in the Perth suburb of Mt Claremont during June of 2005. The 2 congregations (9am and 5pm) are enthusiastic but young in the faith with a need for good, solid, mature ministry support. They are not yet financially self sufficient. The Telfers and Dingles (both from EV) are key families in the ministry of WSCBC. Pray for the recruitment of a good MTS apprentice and for the patience and passion to overcome their lack of visible presence in the community.

Jono and Amy Vink (Tanzania)



Jono and Amy along with their children Lili, Isaac, Brie and Abe are working in Musoma, Tanzania. Jono helps to train church leaders by grounding them in biblical theology and in practical exegetical skills. The aim is to equip locals to teach the Bible and pastor God's people in Tanzania. Amy home schools and is involved in running various groups and Sunday School at the local church.

Paul and Sandra King (Strasbourg, France)



Paul and Sandra have been working in university ministry in France since the 1990s. They are currently in Strasbourg, working with the University Bible Group (GBU). Their ministry with university students involves evangelism, discipling, and training students. They coordinate a ministry apprenticeship program called RELAY, which gives people the opportunity to be equipped for full time bible ministry. France is a very

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Introduction to the book of 1 Thessalonians

In Acts 13, Paul set out from Antioch on his “first” missionary journey. Travelling with Barnabas, Paul preached the gospel in places such as Salamis, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Paul and Barnabas then sailed back to Antioch, “and reported all that God had done through them” to the Christians there (Acts 14:28).

After the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), Paul once again set out from Antioch, this time with Silas, on his “second missionary journey.” They met Timothy in Derbe and took him along with them (Acts 16:3). In addition to revisiting some of the churches he had established on his first missionary journey, Paul also ventured into new areas to preach the gospel.

After being imprisoned in Philippi, Paul and his companions came to Thessalonica where they preached the gospel in the Jewish synagogue on three Sabbaths (Acts 17:2). 1 Thessalonians 2:7-11 tells us that Paul had time to work in Thessalonica, and Philippians 4:16 tells us that the Philippian church partnered in Paul’s ministry by sending him aid in Thessalonica. So while Paul’s stay appears to be longer than three weeks, it was nevertheless fairly short.

During the ministry of Paul, Silas and Timothy in Thessalonica a number of Thessalonians believed the gospel and a young church sprung into existence (see Acts 17:4 & 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10; 2:13). Paul’s stay in Thessalonica was ended by violent Jewish opposition. The persecution that broke out drove Paul and his companions to leave the Thessalonian church while it was in its infancy. The Jews from Thessalonica even followed Paul and his companions to Berea to stir up trouble for them there also.

Paul was anxious about the Thessalonians and whether they were standing firm in the faith (1 Thessalonians 3:5). He longed to see them, but it was not possible for him to return to them (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18), and so he sent Timothy to find out how they were going and to strengthen and encourage them in their faith (1 Thessalonians 3:2-3).

1 Thessalonians was written on Timothy’s return to Paul with the good news that the Thessalonians were standing firm in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 3:6-8). Paul was overjoyed and wrote to encourage them to continue on in the faith.

Paul likely wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth a few months after he had planted the church there (around 50 A.D.). This makes it one of the earliest writings of the new Testament.

Despite the church's infancy it was in many ways a model to other churches throughout Greece (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8). They were doing well, their turning to Christ had been genuine (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10) and they were growing in faith, hope and love (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Paul was greatly encouraged by how the church was doing. However, being young in the faith it was a church that had a lot yet to learn, and so Paul wrote to them regarding some issues about which they had questions or needed further instruction. He also wrote to spur them on to do what they had been doing more and more.

1 Thessalonians 4:1 is the hinge verse of the letter. For the first three chapters Paul has been speaking to the Thessalonians about the way they received the gospel, about his ministry among them, about his concern that they might not be standing firm in the faith, and about his great joy at Timothy's report that they are indeed standing firm. In 1 Thessalonians 4:1 he says "Finally brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more." They are a church that is going well, that is growing in holiness, that is maturing in spite of persecution. But here Paul encourages them to do this "more and more". The letter is like a big pat on the back that affirms how they have been living in order to please God, and encourages them to keep pressing on to do this more and more.

The last two chapters of 1 Thessalonians contain a variety of instructions and teaching that Paul believes the Thessalonians need to hear in order to help them grow and mature further so that they might live in order to please God more and more. It is likely that some of the instructions are in answer to questions the Thessalonians had for Paul, as passed on by Timothy, or at least areas that Timothy observed the Thessalonians needed further instruction or teaching in during his time with them.

Some of the big themes that come up in the book of 1 Thessalonians are: the power of the Word of God (seen in its effect on the Thessalonians), how to do gospel ministry (as Paul defends his ministry), how to pastor people (seen in Paul's intense concern for the Thessalonians), how to cope with suffering (seen in the Thessalonians' response to persecution), how to live in order to please God, what will happen when the Lord returns, and how we should live in light of that day.

It is a rich and encouraging book. May the Lord enable us to live in order to please Him more and more as we study 1 Thessalonians!



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must be tested against God's revealed Word in the Scriptures. Clearly then it does not carry the same authority as those Scriptures.

The fact that the gift of prophecy depends on revelation does not limit us to a form of revelation that threatens the finality of the Bible. In fact the use of "revelation" language in the Scriptures is much broader than we tend to think. So for example, when Peter makes his confession at Caesarea Philippi, he has to be told that the Father had revealed this truth to him (Matthew 16:17) – in other words revelation can take place without the individual knowing that it is taking place or has taken place. Furthermore 1 Corinthians 2:10 speaks of the revelation that comes to all those God chooses. Similarly in Ephesians 1:17 and 3:14-19 the concept of revelation appears associated with the Christian's growing grasp of spiritual realities – a "growing grasp" that can come only through God's grace. Therefore Paul's reference to "revelation" in 1 Corinthians 14 does not mean that prophecy is necessarily authoritative, infallible, or Bible-threatening.

The authority of New Testament prophecy is only grounded in how faithfully it reflects the Word of God as found in the Scriptures.

Week 1: Acts 17:1-15

The book of Acts provides us with some helpful background to 1 Thessalonians.

Day 1

Read Acts 17:1-9.

1. What did Paul do when he arrived in Thessalonica?
2. In your own words, what was the message Paul preached? (verses 2-3)
3. What were the different reactions to Paul's message? What sort of reactions should we expect as we share the gospel? (verses 4-9; see also Acts 17:32-34)

Pray that you would be bold in proclaiming Jesus as the king who suffered and rose from the dead, expecting a variety of reactions from rejection to conversion.

Day 2

Read Acts 17:10-15.

1. Paul travelled to Berea. What did he do when he got there? Considering what had just occurred in Thessalonica, what does this show us about Paul?
2. What attitude did the Bereans have towards Paul and the Bible? How can you be more like the Bereans in this way?

3. When the Jews in Thessalonica learnt that Paul was preaching the Word of God in Berea, what did they do? What does this show about them and about the nature of some opposition to the gospel?

Pray that you would be someone with a growing hunger to read the Bible more, and would check everything you hear and think against it.

Day 3

Read Acts 17:1-15.

1. How long was Paul in Thessalonica? (see Acts 17:1-10 & 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18; but also 2:7-11 & Philippians 4:15-16)
2. If you were Paul and were forced to leave the Thessalonian church so early in its existence, how might you feel about them?
3. Luke is concerned in the book of Acts to show us how the gospel cannot be stopped, moving from Jerusalem to Rome where Paul proclaims it without hindrance (Acts 28:31). Why does Luke include Acts 17:1-9? How do these verses encourage us?

Thank God that His Spirit-empowered Word is unstoppable, bringing salvation to the ends of the earth in spite of opposition.

Day 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 1-3.

1. What themes or ideas do you notice in the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians?

Appendix – New Testament Prophecy

The gift of prophecy seen in the New Testament is different from prophecy in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament God spoke to His people through prophets, and the words of God's prophets came with God's authority. The prophets themselves were aware of this, saying things like "This is what the LORD says...". In the Old Testament there are also strong warnings against false prophecy, with the penalty being death.

In the New Testament, it is the apostles (those chosen by Jesus to be witnesses of His life, death and resurrection and to have the ministry of speaking and writing with His authority) who take on the prophet's role of proclaiming the Word of the Lord, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The message spoken by the apostles was one that could not be changed in any way (Galatians 1:6-9) for it comes from God. For Paul, the legitimate heirs and successors of the Old Testament prophets, in terms of authority, were not New Testament prophets, but the apostles.

The essence of prophecy throughout the Bible is not prediction of the future so much as revelation of the mind and will of God. In the New Testament, prophecy is described as being for the "strengthening, encouragement and comfort" of the church (1 Corinthians 14:3). It is a means of building up Christian character, of encouraging and strengthening people, and of giving them comfort in their distress (of course prophecy is not the only gift that does these things).

Prophecy involves speaking to people (1 Corinthians 14:3), in a way that they can understand (in contrast to tongues). It appears to involve receiving a revelation, that is it comes from God (1 Corinthians 14:30). In other words it appears that the "information" contained in the prophecy is not from study but revelation.

This connection of prophecy to "revelation" makes many Christians nervous since it appears to place the gift of "prophecy" on the same level as the inspired Word of God (which came through the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles). But Paul makes clear in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians that such an assessment of prophecy is not appropriate. Paul obviously believes that the gift of prophecy is revelatory (1 Corinthians 14:30); but this does not lead him to regard the authority of the prophets as absolute. This is most clear in Paul's instructions regarding the "weighing" of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:29 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 (compare Paul's attitude to his own words and his placement of the "prophets" under his own authority in 1 Corinthians 14:37-38). Prophecy is expected to be mixed in quality and

Prayer Points and Notes

2. What stands out to you in these chapters?

Give thanks that God has enabled you to accept the Word of God as it actually is, "the Word of God", which is at work in us who believe.

Day 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 4-5.

1. What themes or ideas do you notice in the last two chapters of 1 Thessalonians?

2. What stands out to you in these chapters?

Pray that as we study Thessalonians God would awaken in you a deep passion for holiness, and a strong expectation of the return of the Lord Jesus.

Prayer Points and Notes

3. How have you gone in working on these areas?

Ask God to help us be a church that stands firm, lives to please God more and more and sounds forth the word of the Lord.

Day 5

Read 2 Thessalonians.

1. What themes or ideas do you notice in the second letter to the Thessalonians?

2. Are there any that flow on from 1 Thessalonians?

3. What strikes you from 2 Thessalonians?

Ask God to help you stand firm and hold to the teachings of the apostles, while you wait for the Lord Jesus to be revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels.

Give thanks that we have the Word of God to read, as God has preserved His Word that was written by the apostles in letters like 1 Thessalonians. Give thanks that we can pray, and that it is powerful and effective.

Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 1-3.

1. Thinking back over the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians, what things reshaped, challenged or sharpened your thinking?
2. Thinking back over the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians, in what ways were you challenged to change your life?
3. How have you gone in working on these areas?

Pray that God might continue to use your time in 1 Thessalonians to remould your thinking and life long after you have finished studying it this time around.

Day 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 4-5.

1. Thinking back over the last two chapters of 1 Thessalonians, what things reshaped, challenged or sharpened your thinking?
2. Thinking back over the last two chapters of 1 Thessalonians, in what ways were you challenged to change your life?

Week 2: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Day 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3.

1. Who wrote 1 Thessalonians and who was it written to?
2. When was 1 Thessalonians written? (Think through the movement of Paul and his companions in the following verses to answer the question: Acts 17:13-15; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2; Acts 18:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 3:6)
3. What does it mean that the church of the Thessalonians is in “God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”? What sort of relationship do we as individuals and as a church have with God?

Praise God that He has gathered us to Himself and each other in Jesus.

Day 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3.

1. What three things are Paul, Silas, and Timothy thankful for? What do you reckon they mean?
2. What is the connection between:
 - a. work and faith (compare with James 2:14-19)
 - b. labour and love (compare with 1 John 3:16-18; 5:3)
 - c. endurance and hope (compare with 2 Corinthians 4:13-18)
3. What is one way that you can better display a life of faith, love or hope in your everyday life in the coming week?

Pray that Jesus might grow you in faith that works, love that labours and hope that endures.

Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10.

1. In verse 4, Paul says, “For we know brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you...” How does Paul know that the Thessalonians have been loved and chosen by God? (verses 4-6)
2. How did the Thessalonians respond to the message of the gospel? How did their reception of the gospel effect their lives? (verses 5-6)
3. When we share the gospel with people, is it merely words? How does this passage encourage you in sharing the gospel?

Praise God for choosing you in love to be His, and enabling you to accept the gospel message with joy. Pray that you might share the gospel with family and friends and that it might come to them with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.

Day 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10.

1. In verse 7, Paul describes the Thessalonians as a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. In what way did the converted Thessalonians become role models to other believers?
2. What has happened as a result of the Thessalonians’ response to the gospel? (vv.7-10) How has the gospel “rung out” from Thessalonica?
3. The Thessalonians’ faith, love, and hope impacted greatly on how they lived. They were changed so radically by the gospel that people ‘everywhere’ talked to each other about it (1 Thessalonians 1:8-10). In what places and at what times of the week are you most

Week 10: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

Day 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28.

1. In verses 23-24, what is Paul praying for? What does this show about Paul and his deepest concerns?
2. Is your great desire for yourself and others to be “sanctified through and through?”
3. Why is Paul confident of an answer to this prayer? What had they been called to?

Pray that the Lord might put in your heart a deep desire for yourself and others to be holy and blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus. Thank God that He is faithful in His plan for us: to make us holy.

Day 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28.

1. In verse 25, Paul asks for prayer. What does this show about him and about prayer? How would this request encourage the Thessalonians?
2. What does verse 27 show about what Paul thought of his words in this letter?
3. In verse 28, Paul finishes with a little prayer. What is “grace,” and so what is he asking for them? Is this what you desire and pray for others?

Prayer Points and Notes

recognisable as a Christian and in what places and at what times in your week are you least recognisable as a Christian?

4. What must we do to be Christian models worth imitating? The Thessalonian church had a major impact on the world around them. What must we do as individuals and as a church to have a similar impact on the world around us?

Pray that we as individuals and as a church would be so radically changed by the gospel that we would be a model for other Christians to copy, and that the Lord's message would ring out from us across the coast.

Day 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10.

1. What does verse 10 tell us about Jesus?
2. Verses 9-10 are a good description of how someone becomes a Christian. From these verses, what must someone do to become a Christian?
3. The Thessalonian church turned to God from idols (verse 9). What do you think are idols in Australia today? What things are you tempted to serve or depend on before God?
4. In verse 10, Paul describes the Thessalonians as "waiting for Jesus." What does it mean practically to be "waiting for Jesus?"

Pray that you might continue to live as you were saved: continually turning away from idols to serve the living and true God in greater and greater degree, and having an eager and growing expectation of the coming of Jesus.

Prayer Points and Notes

3. What does it mean that “this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”?

4. How can you be more joyful, prayerful & thankful this week?

Rejoice in your salvation. Pray for something that concerns you. Give thanks for something the Lord has done for you.

Day 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22.

For more information on New Testament prophecy see the appendix at the back of the daily reading notes (page 51).

1. What do you think it means to “put out the Spirit’s fire”, and, considering the context, how would you make sure you didn’t do this?

2. Verses 19-22 seem to be primarily about prophecy, and in these verses it seems that when there is a prophecy it should be tested. From verses 20-22, how are we to deal with new testament prophecy? (see also 1 Corinthians 14:29; 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 9-10)

3. What do you think obedience to verses 19-22 might look like today?

Pray that God would mature you in your understanding of His Word so that any time someone shares with you something that they consider to be from God (whether wisdom, guidance, teaching, sermon, prophesy, vision etc.) you would not treat it with contempt, but rather test it to see if it is in line with God’s Word.

Pray for the leaders of our church, that they might be humble servants who work hard among God's people as they do the work of admonishing. Pray that you might respect, hold in high regard, and love your leaders.

Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15.

1. In verses 14-15 Paul speaks about how members of the church family are to treat each other. From verse 14, who are the idle, the timid and the weak, and how are we to treat each group of people?
2. In verse 15 there are two instructions. What are the instructions, and which do you find easier, to retaliate or to do good?
3. How do you respond when someone wrongs you? Is there anyone in our church that you are holding a grudge against?

Pray that the Lord would enable you to be proactive in being kind and loving to people, and that equally He would enable you not to retaliate, hold grudges, or repay people when they wrong you.

Day 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

1. How are the three commands in verses 16 & 17 linked, and what is the secret to them?
2. What reasons do the Thessalonians, and us, have for being so full of joy and thanks (see also 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)?

Week 3: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Day 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6.

1. In verses 1-16, Paul recounts his "mission" in Thessalonica. What does Paul say about the circumstances that surrounded his "mission" and how did he respond to these circumstances? (verse 2)

In chapter 1 we saw how the Thessalonian church was a model worth imitating. In chapter 2 we find another valuable model in Paul (and his companions).

2. In verse 2 Paul recounts how he and his companions continued preaching the gospel despite the opposition and persecution that they were facing. What things or situations make you reluctant to share the gospel with other people? How can we be more like Paul and his companions in these circumstances?

Pray that the Lord would make you bold like Paul and His companions.

Day 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6.

1. What do we learn from verses 3-6 about Paul's:
 - a. message
 - b. motives in ministry
 - c. methods in ministry

2. How should Paul's example shape the way we and our church are involved in sharing the gospel?
3. Some today want to argue that in ministry "the ends justifies the means," that it is okay to do anything to bring people into the church. Considering Paul's example, why is it important to consider the methods that we use in ministry?
4. Why is it important to examine our own motives in ministry? What can we do about impure motives that we might have?

Pray that we would be a church that ministers with integrity, sharing the gospel entrusted to us with motives and actions that please God. Pray also for your own motives in serving Christ and His church.

Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:6-12.

1. In verses 7 and 11 Paul uses the images of both a mother and a father relating to a child to describe the way he dealt with the Thessalonians. What do these images and verses tell us about Paul's ministry to the Thessalonians?
2. What are some practical ways that we can act like Paul, as a "mother" and "father," to those Christians around us?
3. This week who are you going to seek to:
 - a. encourage?
 - b. comfort?
 - c. urge on?

Week 9: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

Day 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22.

1. In verses 12-22 Paul gives the Thessalonians a list of instructions. What are the key topics he brings up here in the final part of his letter?
2. We need to do all these things. Which ones do you find easiest to obey & which one do you find hardest to obey?
3. Which instruction jumps out at you the most as something that you need to work on?

Pray that the Lord would show how you can live a more obedient and holy life among the community of believers.

Day 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.

1. As Australians, what attitude do we usually have towards our leaders or those in authority over us?
2. How are the leaders of God's people described, and what are they to be doing?
3. What attitude does Paul instruct us to have towards the leaders of our church? When is this hard for you?

Prayer Points and Notes

Pray that the Lord would give you people who you can minister to, and pray that you would deal with them with care and gentleness as you encourage, comfort and urge them to live lives worthy of God.

Day 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:6-12.

1. Why did Paul work so hard “day and night” while he was with the Thessalonians? (verses 9-12. You might also want to look at 1 Corinthians 9:7-12) How might we imitate this principle of Paul’s in the ministry of our church, and in our own personal ministry?
2. What did Paul and his companions share with the Thessalonians? (verse 8) What does this teach us about the nature of gospel ministry?
3. In verse 10 Paul speaks of his life lived in the presence of the Thessalonians as he shared his life with them. Why is the way we live so important for our witness to the gospel? What areas of your life might be a hindrance to your witnessing to friends and what can you do to change this?

Pray that we would share our lives with our brothers and sisters, especially if we have a position of leadership, and that as we do so we would seek to live holy, righteous and blameless lives.

Day 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

Six times in this passage Paul makes clear that he is recalling for the Thessalonians things they already know regarding his mission in Thessalonica (2:1, 2:2, 2:5, 2:9, 2:10, 2:11). All this leads us to ask why

Paul reminds the Thessalonians of these things.

1. Acts 17:1-15 tells of Paul's time in Thessalonica. Now in 1 Thessalonians Paul is writing to the Thessalonians for perhaps the first time since he left. Under what circumstances did Paul's ministry in Thessalonica end?
2. In 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16 Paul appears to be defending his ministry in Thessalonica. Assuming we are hearing Paul's responses to accusations which have filtered back to him, what sort of things were Paul's "enemies" saying against him?
3. How does Paul defend his ministry? From this, what does Paul believe about when ministry is a success and when it is a failure?

Pray for the leaders and members of our church that our ministry would be characterised by the true gospel message, by right motives, by a desire to please God, by gentle but strong leadership, by a desire to share life with each other, and by selfless, sacrificial service.

3. If you knew Jesus was returning in the next month, how would you live differently to the way you are currently living?

Give thanks to God for giving us a Christian family to love and encourage us. Pray that we might encourage others, especially with the truths of Jesus' second coming, and in light of the urgency it brings.

1. We have a great hope of salvation. What is our salvation based on, and how has it been won?
2. It is possible to read passages like 5:6-8 and 5:12-22 and slip into thinking that we earn our salvation by how we live. How do verses 9-11 help us with this?
3. Should knowing that we are “not appointed to suffer wrath” but rather will “live together with Him (Jesus)” because of Christ’s death motivate us to or de-motivate us from living a godly life?

Ask God for forgiveness for the many times when you have not lived as alert and self-controlled, but your actions have looked more like they belong to the darkness. Give thanks for your salvation won by the death of Jesus.

Day 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 started by answering a question the Thessalonians had about the coming of Jesus and ended with the words “Therefore encourage each other with these words” (verse 18).

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 started by answering a question the Thessalonians had about the coming of Jesus and ended with the words “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

1. What should a true knowledge of Jesus’ return do for us?
2. In light of Jesus’ return what should we do for others? How does the fact that Jesus is returning make it more urgent to encourage and build one another up?

Prayer Points and Notes

Week 4: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5

Day 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16.

1. The letter to the Thessalonians began with thanksgiving. This now continues at the end of chapter 2. From verse 13, what is Paul thankful for?
2. How does Paul know that the Thessalonians received his gospel as “the word of God?” (verse 14)
3. What does the fact that Paul calls the message he has spoken “the Word of God” tell us about what Paul thinks of himself as an apostle? How can we hear the Word of God today?
4. When the gospel that God gave the apostles is shared or preached consistently with how it has been handed down by them in the new testament, is it just our words or God’s word?

Give thanks that in the Scriptures we have received the Word of God, and that God has enabled us to accept it as it is, the Word of God.

Day 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16.

1. In chapter 1 Paul spoke of the Thessalonians as imitators of him and of the Lord (verse 6). Now in chapter 2 Paul says that the Thessalonians became imitators of “God’s churches in Judea” (2:14). In what way were the Thessalonians like these churches?

3. Who will be surprised by the day, and who won’t?

Pray for your family and friends who are not prepared to meet the Lord.

Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:6-11.

1. Verse 6 starts with “So then”. In light of the fact that Jesus is coming and the Thessalonians are “sons of the day” (verse 5), how should they live (and us too)?
2. What does it mean to “keep alert & self-controlled” (which could be more literally translated “awake and sober”), and why is this the only appropriate way to live for Christians?
3. Paul uses the soldier image to teach us how to be “self controlled” or “sober.” What three things are we to put on?
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:3. At the beginning of the letter Paul thanked God for the outworking of the Thessalonians’ faith, hope and love, but here he urges them to put on these very same things. What does this teach us about the Christian life?

Pray that you might live as a son of the day, awake and sober, growing continually in faith, love and hope.

Day 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:6-11.

Week 8: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 is all dealing with the second coming of Jesus and its implications. 4:13-18 is answering a question something like “What happens to Christians who have died when Jesus returns?” 5:1-11 is answering a question like “When will Jesus return?”

Day 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3.

1. What is the world’s view of the future?
2. What do verses 1-3 teach us about when Jesus’ return will be, and how it will come?
3. What is a Christian attitude to the future? (see also 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18)

Pray that the Lord would enable you to live with a strong expectation of Jesus’ return, with this reality shaping your daily life.

Day 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5.

1. Paul divides all of humanity into two categories using light/dark day/night imagery. What does it mean to be a “son of” something, and so who are these two groups of people?
2. Is this how you think of humanity (especially people you know), as being in one of these two categories?

2. How is it that the persecutors of the Judean church can be said to “displease God” and to be “hostile to all men?”
3. If this is hostility, what is the most loving thing you can do for someone? Are you being loving in this way?

Pray that God would enable those who are persecuted for believing the gospel to stand firm in Christ and not seek revenge. Pray that God would enable you to show the greatest love you can to people by sharing the gospel of salvation with them.

Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5.

1. From verses 17-20, why do you think Paul felt the way he did about the Thessalonians?
2. What did Paul invest himself in according to 2:17-20? Is this a good investment?
3. What are you investing yourself in? How is this seen in your life? Is it a good investment?

Pray that God would enable you to make a deep and consistent investment in people and their faith in Christ. Pray that those you love and serve would be your glory and joy.

Day 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5.

1. How is Timothy described? What does this teach us about our work in the gospel?
2. Why did Paul send Timothy to Thessalonica?
3. What is Paul's big fear for the Thessalonians? What does this teach us about the value of faith?

Pray that God would both impress upon you how precious your faith in Christ is and protect you from having your faith shaken or lost.

Day 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5.

1. What realities does Paul remind the Thessalonians of in verses 3-4? Are these realities for you?
2. Who is the great enemy of Christians, what is he seeking to do, and how does he do it?
3. In verse 5, Paul says when he "could stand it no longer" he sent Timothy to find out about their faith. What does this teach us about Paul? Is this how we feel about our Christian brothers and sisters? How could you cultivate this attitude?

Pray that your heart would be filled with deep love and concern for your Christian brothers and sisters, a deep desire that they would not be tempted by the tempter but would stand firm in their faith in God.

Prayer Points and Notes

Give thanks that Jesus will come again in a way that no one can miss or avoid, coming in victory, wrapping up history, handing out perfect judgment, rooting out all evil, bringing in the new creation. Pray that you would be filled with longing for this day.

Day 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

1. What is the one destiny of both those who “have fallen asleep” and those who “are left”? (verse 17)
2. What does this teach us about the focus of our hope? Is this what you are eager for?
3. How can you grow your desire for Jesus to return?

Pray that day by day you would grow in your desire for Jesus to return so that you can be with the Lord forever.

Prayer Points and Notes

Week 5: 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Day 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10.

1. Why did Paul send Timothy to Thessalonica? (verses 1-5)
2. What news did Timothy bring about the Thessalonians on his return to Paul? (verses 3:6-8)
3. How did Paul respond to Timothy's report about the Thessalonians and what does this show about him? (verses 3:7-13)
4. Deep down (where it is possible to be unconcerned or even jealous) how do you respond when you hear other Christian are going well in the faith?

Pray for a joyful heart that is glad for others who are continuing strongly in their faith in God, even those who have hurt you.

Day 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10.

1. Thinking back to yesterday, what effect did Timothy's report have on Paul and his companions? (verses 6-10)
2. In verse 8 Paul says "now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord." This makes it sound like he almost couldn't go on living if they had given up on Jesus. How is Paul's love and concern for the Thessalonians throughout this passage a challenge to our love and concern for others?

3. As you reflect on your approaching death, how firm is your hope of an eternal future with Jesus? What is your hope based upon?

Pray that you would have a strong hope in your eternal future with Christ that He has won for you by His death and resurrection.

Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

1. Will those "in Christ" miss out in any way when Jesus returns? (verse 15)
2. What should a Christian attitude to death be? (see John 11:35; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Philippians 1:21, 1:23-24, 2:27)
3. From 1 Thessalonians 1:3, what will be the fruit of real hope? Do you see this fruit growing in your life?

Pray that the Lord would enable you to see death rightly, seeing the victory and joy it is to go to be with Christ even amid the sorrow and pain that death brings. Pray that your hope would bear the fruit of endurance, pressing on in Christ through all circumstances of life.

Day 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

1. What do verses 16-17 tell us about Jesus' return?
2. How do verses 16-17 make you feel? How do you think they should make you feel?

Week 7: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

In these verses Paul seems to be addressing an issue in the Thessalonian church. It appears that members of the church were dying and the Lord had not yet returned, and so the Thessalonians were worried that those Christians who had died would in some way miss out when Christ did return.

Day 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

1. Why does it seem Paul has written this part of the letter? (verses 13 & 18)
2. Who are those “who fall asleep,” and why are they described like this? (See verse 14; Philippians 1:21-24; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. It is unlikely that Paul is teaching that our souls sleep between our death and Jesus’ second coming. He has something else in mind).

Give thanks that when we die in Christ we go to be with Him, which is better by far, even as we wait for the resurrection of the dead and our full resurrection existence in the new creation.

Day 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14.

1. How does the world grieve for those who have died?
2. How is it to be different for the Christian, and why?

3. Following Paul’s example, in what ways could you better look out for your Christian brothers & sisters?

Pray that God would place in your heart a deep love, care and concern for your Christian brothers and sisters so that their progress in the faith would be of deep importance to you.

Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:6-13.

1. Why was the opinion of the Thessalonians (verse 6) so important to Paul both as a man and as an apostle? When we care about what people think of us is it for the same reasons?
2. Paul made clear that he wanted to visit the Thessalonians personally but couldn’t (2:17-18), and so he sent Timothy in his place (3:1-2). But even after this, in his prayer (3:11), he shows that he still wants to visit them. Why is it so important to Paul that he be able to come to them personally?
3. What does Paul’s desire to visit them personally teach us about ministry? How can communications technology (e.g. phones, mobiles emails, facebook etc.) be helpful in ministry, and how can it be a threat to healthy ministry?

Ask God to give you opportunities to personally encourage and minister to people.

Day 4

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13.

1. People's prayers show what is dear to their hearts. What does Paul's prayer show is dear to his heart? What are his big goals?
2. Are these your goals for yourself? Do you pray for them?
3. Which of these things should you desire and pray for more for others?

Pray that God would constantly reshape your goals to be in line with His goals. Pray to grow in love and holiness for yourself and others.

Day 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13.

1. How can these verses guide our prayers?
2. Use these verses to write a prayer in your own words.

Pray it for our church. Pray it for one other person.

Prayer Points and Notes

Day 4**Prayer Points and Notes**

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.

1. What ambition are the Thessalonians to have? Are your ambitions for life the same as God's ambitions for your life?
2. The issues spoken about in these verses continue to be a problem for the Thessalonians after this letter and so Paul writes about them in his second letter to the Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians). Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15. With this passage in mind, what does it mean to lead a "quiet life," what does it look like to "mind your own business" and what does it mean to work with your hands?
3. From verse 12, what results will Paul's instructions in verse 11 achieve? Who are the outsiders who are watching your life?

Pray that God would enable you to lead a calm and settled life rather than one that is restless. Pray that He would enable you to be helpful to others but not interfering, hard working and not idle.

Day 5

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12.

1. What areas of life are covered by these instructions, and what does this show us about the Christian life?
2. Twice in this passage Paul says that the Thessalonians are living as he had taught them (verses 1 & 10). He goes on to urge them to "do so more and more." What does this teach us about the Christian life?
3. What is the connection between this passage and the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians?

Pray that God would place in us a strong desire to press on in Christ, growing in holiness and living a life pleasing to Him.

Week 6: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

In the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians Paul has recalled his history with the Thessalonians, speaking of how they received the gospel and how they continue to stand firm in the faith. In chapters 4 and 5 Paul moves on to instructing the Thessalonians in how to continue to live pleasing God in various areas of life, including reshaping their thinking about the second coming of Christ.

Day 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2.

1. Before this letter, what instructions have Paul and his companions given the Thessalonians, and on whose authority? Where do we need to look to find out what pleases God?
2. What does it mean to please God? Is it your life's goal to "live in order to please God?" What areas in life do you need to apply this to that you haven't yet?
3. What does Paul ask and urge the Thessalonians to do? Are there any areas in your life where you have stopped moving forward, and need to seek to please God in this area 'more and more'?

Pray that God would place in your heart a deep desire to please Him by living a holy life in every way, and that He would give you the day-to-day strength to live this out.

Day 2

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.

1. "What is God's will for my life?" is a question people often ask. What is God's will for the Thessalonians and for us? (verse 3)

2. How are Christians not to use their bodies and sexual desires, and how are they to use them? (verses 3-8) How does this challenge you?
3. What are the reasons that Paul gives in this passage for living this way?
4. What is Paul referring to when he speaks of "God calling us"? (verse 7; see also 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9; Jude 1) What is your calling?

Pray that you would be obedient to the will of God and be holy, especially in the area of sexuality. Ask for forgiveness and healing for where you have sinned in this area.

Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10.

1. What is "brotherly love" and why does Paul not need to write to the Thessalonians about this?
2. What does Paul urge them to do?
3. The Thessalonians were a church who loved each other. They also loved those even further away, "the brothers throughout Macedonia." How would our church be different if we loved each other as the Thessalonians did?

Ask for forgiveness for the times you haven't shown love to Christians you know. Ask God to strengthen you through His Spirit to love one another 'more and more'.