

## Weekend

Go through both letters and look out for all the teaching on the Lord's return - both what Paul taught would happen and also the effects it should have on the lives of believers. How does it add to what you learnt from the study on the second coming (week 36)?

### Notes



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### **Meeting With God Bible Reading Notes**

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### **Week 38: Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians, 2 (A detailed study)**

*We should communicate our knowledge and experiences one to another. We should join in prayer and praise one with another. We should set a good example one before another. And it is the duty of those especially who live in the same vicinity and family thus to comfort and edify one another; and this is the best neighbourhood, the best means to answer the end of society. Such as are nearly related together and have affection for one another, as they have the greatest opportunity, so they are under the greatest obligation, to do this kindness one to another. This the Thessalonians did ... and this is what they are exhorted to continue and increase in doing.*

Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on the Whole Bible (Evangelical Press, 1982).

### **Day 1. More on practical Christianity**

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:12-28**

This looks like a collection of odds and ends of instructions - but there's a lot here!

1. Go through the passage and make a list of any of Paul's instructions which seem particularly relevant - either to you personally, or to your church.

Pray about each of the things on your list. Ask God to show you where he wants you particularly to take action.

2. It's easy to feel discouraged when you read a passage like this! Meditate on verses 23-24 - how should they affect your attitude to any changes God wants you to make in your life?

### **Day 2. Thank God - always!**

#### **2 Thessalonians 1:1-12**

This letter was probably written shortly after the first, and picks up many of

the same issues.

1. What can you find out from here about the Thessalonians' reaction to suffering? How was it affecting their Christian lives?
2. What features of the Lord's return does Paul draw attention to here?
3. What effects do you think these features would have on the readers?
4. What is Paul praying for the Thessalonians in verses 11-22? Try to write each petition in different words.

Pray for Christians who are suffering for their faith. Try to find specific things from the passage to use in your prayer for them.

For examples of Christians suffering in other countries, you could look at [www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org) or [www.opendoorsuk.org/](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/)

### **Day 3. More about the Lord's return**

#### **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

In this passage Paul reminds the Thessalonians of what he had already told them (verse 5) and adds to that. Unfortunately we don't have his original teaching, and in consequence this passage is not always easy to understand.

'The man of lawlessness' or 'Wicked One' (GNB) is a mysterious figure who must appear before the end. He is also known as the antichrist in John's letters. It is not clear whether he is human or a supernatural figure, but he is the agent of Satan (verse 9) and the ultimate embodiment of evil. Lawlessness is already at work in the world (verse 7 - see also 1 John 2:18) but is held back by a restraining power. Again the identity of this restraint is difficult, but the most likely explanation is that it is the principle of law and government, embodied for Paul in the Roman Empire.

1. What are the characteristics of evil - in both Satan and his agents - found in this passage?
2. What attitudes do you think Paul expects the Thessalonians to have towards evil?
3. The effects of lawlessness and evil in the world are only too obvious in every news bulletin. How do you think Christians should react? How should this passage affect your prayer for world events?

### **Day 4. God at work**

#### **2 Thessalonians 2:13 - 3:5**

Paul turns from considering the fate of those who reject God to the future of the Thessalonian Christians.

1. What future does he expect for them?
2. What is God's part in their conversion and continuing Christian life?
3. What have the Thessalonians done, and what does Paul expect them to do in the future?
4. In what areas has God acted? What are the areas in which the Thessalonians are expected to act? How would you respond to a Christian who said that he or she didn't need to bother reading the Bible, or to make a real effort, as God was bringing them to maturity anyway?

In 3:1 Paul asks his readers to pray for him as he preaches the gospel. Pray for anyone you know of engaged in missionary work elsewhere - perhaps John & Rachel McDonough in Paraguay, or our support of evangelism among the Tribes of the Sierra madre mountains in the Philippines: Pastor Miller, Pastor Elias and their co-workers.

### **Day 5. Practical Christianity - again!**

#### **2 Thessalonians 3:6-18**

1. What principles does Paul teach here about work?
2. How would you apply them to someone currently facing unemployment?
3. Consider verse 16. The outward circumstances of the church at Thessalonica were anything but peaceful! What might peace have meant to them? What troubled circumstances do you face at the moment? How might the Lord's peace affect you?
4. In this passage we learn more of how Paul preached in Thessalonica. From here, and from what you learnt in the first letter (especially studies 2 and 3) what picture do you get of Paul's ministry?