

The Book of I Thessalonians

11

Morning Devotions

Select a passage in God's Word. Talk with the Lord as you read the passage, then go back and find one or two verses which the Lord has impressed on your heart and meditate on them.

Morning Study

This morning we begin reading the book of **1 Thessalonians**. But before we do, let's first acquaint ourselves a little with the background of the Thessalonian church.

The city of Thessalonika was an important trade center, a seaport at the head of the Thermaic Gulf in Macedonia, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) from Philippi.

Read Acts 17:1-9

The church in Thessalonika started after Paul spoke in the city's synagogue. As **Acts 17:4** records:

“Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.”

But with this dramatic birth of the church came immediate persecution, and Paul had to flee the city. Some time later, in Corinth, Paul writes to the Thessalonians based on a report he had received from Timothy (**1 Thessalonians 3:6**). His main purposes in writing the letter were:

- To encourage the new converts in the trials they were facing (**3:3-5**)
- To give instructions on “how to live in order to please God” (**4:1-12**)
- To provide assurance regarding the future of believers who die before Christ returns (**4:13-5:11**)

With these three things in mind – encouragement, instruction and assurance – let's read through the whole book of **1 Thessalonians** in one sitting. As you read, take note how every chapter ends with a reference to the second coming of the Lord. Although the purpose of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian Christians is varied, this theme of Christ's return permeates the whole letter.

Memory Verse

Be joyful always; pray continually;
give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is God's will for you
in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to memorize your memory verse:

- ➡ Ask the Lord to help you remember his Word (see [John 14:26](#)).
- ➡ Use the version of the Bible you are most familiar with. What you normally read in your Bible is what you need to be memorizing.
- ➡ Don't just memorize the contents of the verse; memorize its "address" (the verse reference) as well. You can do this by following this pattern: Step 1: **reference**; Step 2: **verse content**; Step 3: **reference**. Then repeat steps 1-3. Note that you are quoting the reference twice as many times as you quote the actual verse content. This gives the verse a clear "reference tag."
- ➡ After you have read your memory verse out aloud several times, try going through your memory verse *without* reading your computer screen.
- ➡ Look up your memory verse in your Bible. Look at its immediate context and read the verses that come before and after your memory verse.
- ➡ Print out your memory verse or jot it down on a piece of paper. Take this paper with you when you go to work or do other daily activities. Meditate on the meaning of the verse throughout the day.
- ➡ During your noon appointment with the Lord, take out your memory verse and go over it again. Talk to the Lord about what this verse means to you personally.
- ➡ In the evening (at either your evening study or your evening devotions), see if you can quote your memory verse from memory. Then, without looking at the memory verse itself, see if you can find it in your Bible.
- ➡ The next day, before you begin committing a new verse to memory, rehearse your previous day's memory verse and see if you can remember it (without cheating!).
- ➡ Finally, at the end of the week (possibly on the Sunday), collect all your week's memory verses, rehearse them and see if you can recall them without reading them. Spend a little extra time on any verses you have difficulty recalling.
- ➡ Remember: Don't just memorize a verse. Put it into practice ([James 1:22](#)). It is not being able to quote a verse from memory that counts. It is His Word *abiding* in your heart that counts ([John 15:7](#)). When you actually apply a verse consistently to your daily life, that is when you *truly* know that verse!