

1 Thessalonians: A Church Pushing Back Spiritual Darkness

One sign of a healthy church is for God's people to _____. Paul served with other men and women. He named *Silvanus* and *Timothy* (1 Thess. 1:1). Paul extended a typical greeting to the church by saying, "Grace to you and peace" (1 Thess. 1:1). Why did Paul always list grace first? It's impossible to have peace without grace.

The Thessalonian church was _____! I'd want to be a _____ of that church.

- The church _____ faith, love, and hope in the Lord Jesus (1 Thess. 1:3).
- The church embraced the _____ (1 Thess. 1:4).
- The church _____ the godly lifestyles of Jesus and His servants (1 Thess. 1:6).
- The church possessed a _____ to the world (1 Thess. 1:8).
- The church was _____ and _____ to God's servants (1 Thess. 1:9).
- The church _____ the true and living God (1 Thess. 1:9).
- The church _____ in Jesus's soon return, His glorious resurrection, and God's impending wrath (1 Thess. 1:10).

Paul explained that _____ matter in ministry (1 Thess. 2: 3-8). He said, "*For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.*"

- Do we serve to _____ people?
- Do we labor for _____ gain?
- Do we minister for personal _____?
- Do we lead with _____?

The Gospel ministry isn't for _____ people. Paul said, "*For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God*" (1 Thess. 2:9). The call of God is to declare the _____ and to invest in _____. In 1 Thess. 2:11-12, Paul stated, "*For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.*" How many people in ministry lead with a CEO mentality? My heart breaks when I hear pastors say, "I don't visit hospitals; I don't make home visits; and I don't relate with church members outside the office."

_____ continues to hinder God's servants and God's church. Paul talked about how Satan hindered him and his ministry team (1 Thess. 2:18). Paul went on to

explain the real success, joy, and crown of his ministry. He said, *“For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you”* (1 Thess. 2:19)? Our reward in ministry isn’t financial prosperity; it isn’t having our names etched on buildings; and it isn’t possessing the highest levels of education. It’s seeing God redeem, rescue, and transform people’s lives.

Paul’s main concern for the church was the welfare of their _____ (1 Thess. 3:1-2, 5, 6-7, 10). What’s our primary concern for the church today?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Spiritual growth and development are a life-long journey. Paul called the church at Thessalonica to _____ God and _____ one another (1 Thess. 4:1-2, 9-10). Paul never drifted far from a discussion about God’s will. In 1 Thess. 4:3-5, Paul stated, *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”* There are two aspects to God’s will: His _____ will; His _____ will.

As we know, Paul lived with the conviction of the imminent return of Christ. I’ve used Paul’s Words in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 many times at _____. That passage speaks about revelation, return, resurrection, reunion, and responsibility. Jesus’s coming will be swift and unexpected by many. Paul said, *“Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape”* (1 Thess. 5:1-3).

Paul never hesitated to _____ people about living the Christian life. He asked the church to respect those in ministry leadership (1 Thess. 5:12); to come alongside those hurting (1 Thess. 5:14); to avoid trying to get even (1 Thess. 5:15); to do good to all people (1 Thess. 5:15); to rejoice at all times (1 Thess. 5:16); to always be in an attitude of prayer (1 Thess. 5:17); to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thess. 5:18); to quench not the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19); to be students of the Word (1 Thess. 5:20-21); and to avoid every appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

As a church, are _____ pushing back spiritual darkness?

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One sign of a healthy church is for God's people to **serve together**. Paul served with other men and women. He named *Silvanus* and *Timothy* (1 Thess. 1:1). Paul extended a typical greeting to the church by saying, "Grace to you and peace" (1 Thess. 1:1). Why did Paul always list grace first? It's impossible to have peace without grace.

The Thessalonian church was **amazing!** I'd want to be a **member** of that church.

- The church **modeled** faith, love, and hope in the Lord Jesus (1 Thess. 1:3).
- The church embraced the **Gospel** (1 Thess. 1:4).
- The church **followed** the godly lifestyles of Jesus and His servants (1 Thess. 1:6).
- The church possessed a **mission** to the world (1 Thess. 1:8).
- The church was **kind** and **generous** to God's servants (1 Thess. 1:9).
- The church **served** the true and living God (1 Thess. 1:9).
- The church **believed** in Jesus's soon return, His glorious resurrection, and God's impending wrath (1 Thess. 1:10).

Paul explained that **motives** matter in ministry (1 Thess. 2: 3-8). He said, "*For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.*"

- Do we serve to **impress** people?
- Do we labor for **financial** gain?
- Do we minister for personal **fame**?
- Do we lead with **love**?

The Gospel ministry isn't for **lazy** people. Paul said, "*For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God*" (1 Thess. 2:9). The call of God is to declare the **Gospel** and to invest in **people**. In 1 Thess. 2:11-12, Paul stated, "*For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.*" How many people in ministry lead with a CEO mentality? My heart breaks when I hear pastors say, "I don't visit hospitals; I don't make home visits; and I don't relate with church members outside the office."

Satan continues to hinder God's servants and God's church. Paul talked about how Satan hindered him and his ministry team (1 Thess. 2:18). Paul went on to explain the real

success, joy, and crown of his ministry. He said, *“For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you”* (1 Thess. 2:19)? Our reward in ministry isn’t financial prosperity; it isn’t having our names etched on buildings; and it isn’t possessing the highest levels of education. It’s seeing God redeem, rescue, and transform people’s lives.

Paul’s main concern for the church was the welfare of their **faith** (1 Thess. 3:1-2, 5, 6-7, 10). What’s our primary concern for the church today?

- **Baptisms**
- **Budgets**
- **By-Laws**
- **Buildings**
- **Bodies**

Spiritual growth and development are a life-long journey. Paul called the church at Thessalonica to **please** God and **love** one another (1 Thess. 4:1-2, 9-10). Paul never drifted far from a discussion about God’s will. In 1 Thess. 4:3-5, Paul stated, *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”* There are two aspects to God’s will: His **moral** will; His **providential** will.

As we know, Paul lived with the conviction of the imminent return of Christ. I’ve used Paul’s Words in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 many times at **funerals**. That passage speaks about revelation, return, resurrection, reunion, and responsibility. Jesus’s coming will be swift and unexpected by many. Paul said, *“Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape”* (1 Thess. 5:1-3).

Paul never hesitated to **challenge** people about living the Christian life. He asked the church to respect those in ministry leadership (1 Thess. 5:12); to come alongside those hurting (1 Thess. 5:14); to avoid trying to get even (1 Thess. 5:15); to do good to all people (1 Thess. 5:15); to rejoice at all times (1 Thess. 5:16); to always be in an attitude of prayer (1 Thess. 5:17); to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thess. 5:18); to quench not the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19); to be students of the Word (1 Thess. 5:20-21); and to avoid every appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

As a church, are **WE** pushing back spiritual darkness?