

GOSPEL AFFECTIONS – GOSPEL AFFLICTIONS



**Community Group Study Guide
Spring 2010**

1 Thessalonians 1:1–2:16

Holy Trinity Church, Chicago

South Side and West Side Congregations

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WELCOME TO A COMMUNITY GROUP

Welcome to a Holy Trinity Church community group! You may be asking, “What is a community group?” Community groups at Holy Trinity Church help us connect on four levels:

- ***Connect to God:*** All people were designed for relationship with God, and God has always been gathering a people to himself. If our community groups excel at the other three points of connection below, but fail to connect people to the one true and living God, then we’ve failed. Ultimately, the only thing that will matter in this life is if our relationship with God has been restored. Through God’s acts in history, He has provided for our redemption through the person and work of Jesus Christ. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, the others in your community group will be journeying alongside you by studying God’s Word, and collectively you will be learning how to be re-connected with God.
- ***Connect to the Word:*** We at Holy Trinity Church are confident that God has spoken to humanity through the Bible, and since God has spoken we need to listen! Therefore, the study of God’s Word is paramount in your community group experience. We believe as Jesus said in Luke 24:44-47, that all of God’s Word is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Through our study of the Word, we will always connect the text back to the larger story of God’s redeeming acts, culminating in Jesus Christ.
- ***Connect to other people:*** Most of us reside in the bustling city of Chicago, but we are often isolated from authentic community. We were made for relationship with each other. Participation in a community group will allow you to connect to other people through our common exploration of the Bible and related times of fellowship.
- ***Connect to the city:*** We believe God has called Holy Trinity Church to be on a mission for his kingdom. This desire comes from what we have experienced through being in communion with God, and the resulting joy and hope in our life. We want to include as many people as possible to experience our community. God cares about each and every Chicagoan! Consequently, we give of our own time and resources to serve others in Chicago so that everyone in Chicago can be part of God’s community. Community Groups will endeavor to develop participant’s hearts with a desire to serve the poor and disenfranchised, including by serving as a group during two Hope for Chicago service days.

Community Group gatherings

Community Groups meet weekly in homes from mid-September to early May. Each group may take a slightly different approach, but generally the time (typically 2 hours) is broken down between discussion of a previously assigned Biblical text, prayer, and social interaction over refreshments or periodic dinners.

You are most welcome!

Welcome to Community Groups!

Taking a Look at 1 Thessalonians...

Spring 2010 will find us looking at the Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. In it we will hear the heart of God through the heart and pen of the great apostle. As with our previous studies in this ministry year, the studies will be based on the Sunday preaching text which allows us the opportunity to engage with Scripture at several levels in hope that we will better understand the text, God and ourselves, as well as to help us to apply the text to life.

Objectives of this study guide:

- **Greater growth:** We believe that the daily study of God's Word is critical for spiritual growth. We are providing you with materials to study in an accountable context in order to foster greater growth in the Gospel.
- **Greater application:** The opportunity to study a scripture passage a number of times personally, to hear a sermon preached on the text, and then to discuss it in your Community Group will allow for greater understanding and application.

How it works...

We are asking you to engage the Biblical text through:

- *Personal study* - Study each passage on your own, up to three times;
- *A Sunday Sermon* - Hear a sermon preached on the text;
- *Community Group study* - Discuss and apply the passage with the others in your community group.

Personal Study

We suggest that you find a regular time and place for 30 minutes each day to learn from the Scriptures. You will need a pen or pencil, your Bible, a notebook and study materials. In the following pages, each study suggests three readings for each text, along with a set of questions for each reading, each with a slightly different focus.

- *God:* What does this passage tell you about God?
- *Yourself:* What does this passage tell you about yourself (or people in general)?
- *Your life:* What does this passage tell you about how you should live?

Sunday Sermons

Typically each Sunday you will hear a sermon based on the same text as the Community Group study. Our prayer is that the sermon will be a meaningful resource for understanding and applying the Biblical text. The Sunday sermon will also be available online at www.htcchicago.org for those unable to make the service, or if you would like to listen again.

Community Group Study

Most weeks you will have a chance to study and discuss the text together in your community group (see calendar in this booklet).

Resources

Resources provided through Holy Trinity Church:

In order to help you grow in God's word, we will provide you with the following resources:

1. *The Biblical text* – the attached studies have the applicable Biblical text printed (in most cases; because of the length of some of this study's passages, some have been edited) at the beginning of each study. Our study efforts are primarily a study on the Biblical text.
2. *Personal study questions* – the attached studies contain three sets of questions for each study. Arrange your schedule during the week to allow for three separate readings of this text, attempting to answer the questions to the best of your ability. As things come to mind when interacting with the Biblical text, make them a matter of prayer.
3. *Study Bible Notes from the ESV Study Bible* – Through the generosity of the publisher (Crossway Books), we can provide you with a copy of the ESV Study Bible notes on 1 Thessalonians. Please request these if you desire this study aid.

Additional optional resources:

If you would like to study 1 Thessalonians at a more in-depth level, we recommend the following commentaries:

Beale, G. K., *1-2 Thessalonians*. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series

Fee, Gordon D., *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament Series

Morris, Leon, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*

Stott, John R. W., *The Message of 1 & 2 Thessalonians*. The Bible Speaks Today Series

Spring 2010 Calendar

April 5	Community Group Dinner	
April 12	Group Study #1	1 Thessalonians 1:1/Acts 17:1-9 <i>personal study/sermon/group discussion</i>
April 19	Group Study #2	1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 <i>personal study/sermon/group discussion</i>
April 26	Group Study #3	1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 <i>personal study/sermon/group discussion</i>
May 3	Group Study #4 Dinner optional	1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 <i>personal study/sermon/group discussion</i>
May 12	All-Church Communion	United Church of Hyde Park

Study #1: 1 Thessalonians 1:1/Acts 17:1-9

Week 1 – Week of April 12th

Community Group calendar: Study #1

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:1/Acts 17:1-9

Ways in which you will interact with the text:

- Personal study
- Listen to sermon preached on April 11th from 1 Thessalonians 1:1/Acts 17:1-9
- Group discussion during week of April 12th

1 Thessalonians 1:1 (ESV)

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

Acts 17:1-9 (ESV)

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. [2] And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, [3] explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." [4] And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. [5] But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. [6] And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, [7] and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." [8] And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. [9] And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

First Reading – What does the text tell us about God?

1. Process the reception of the Gospel in Thessalonica.

Answer the questions below from 1 Thessalonians 1:1/Acts 17:1-9.

- a. What was the venue for the Gospel (the city, the setting in the city)?
- b. What was the result of the Gospel?
- c. What were the effects/fruit of the Gospel?

Answer the questions below from Acts 17:1-9.

- d. Where were the roots of the Gospel?
- e. What was the content of the Gospel?

2. What are the implications of being “in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”?

Read John 10:27-30.

Second Reading –What does the text tell us about people/ourselves?

1. Process Paul’s ministerial approach in Thessalonica.

- a. What might have been some of the Old Testament texts that Paul used in his “reasoning from the Scriptures” (Acts 17:2)?
2. Consider the reception of the Gospel in Thessalonica.
 - a. What do the responses tell you about the Thessalonian people (at least some of them)?
 - b. Contrast the responses of the Thessalonians in Acts 17: 4 & 5ff.

Third Reading – What are the “take aways” from the text as to how we should live?

1. How prepared are you for Gospel opportunities that may come your way?
2. What do we learn from Paul as it relates to preparation for Gospel opportunities?
3. What responses should you prepare for from those to whom you speak the Gospel?
4. What prayer requests emerge from the study of this passage?

Summarize the passage:

What is the **primary emphasis** of the passage (i.e., a sentence that captures the timeless essence of the passage)?

How might the primary emphasis of the passage **apply to the lives of Christians today** (i.e., how should you respond to this passage in thought and behavior)?

Prayer requests

Study #2: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

Week 2 - **Week of April 19th**

Community Group calendar: **Study #2**

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

Ways in which you will interact with the text:

- Personal study
- Listen to sermon preached on April 18th from 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10
- Group discussion during week of April 19th

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 (ESV)

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, [3] remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. [4] For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, [5] because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. [6] And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, [7] so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. [8] For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God

has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. [9] For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, [10] and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

First Reading – What does the text tell us about God?

1. The activity of God was evident among the Thessalonians. From this week's text, what had the Lord done among them?
2. Highlight in the passage the evidences of the Holy Spirit's working through the proclamation of the Gospel. What were evidences that God had sovereignly chosen believers in Thessalonica?
3. How is the Lord contrasted with the gods from whom the Thessalonians had turned?
4. Note the Trinitarian references in this week's text. What verses mention the God/the Father? The Son? The Holy Spirit? What can we learn about each member of the Trinity from these references?

Second Reading – What does the text tell us about people/ourselves?

The actions/activity of the Lord's Gospel agents (Paul and his team [v. 1a]) and the recipients of the Gospel (the Thessalonian believers [v. 1b]) are noteworthy in this week's text.

1. Jot down the activities of the Lord's Gospel agents from the verses noted below:
 - a. v. 2
 - b. v. 3
 - c. v. 5
2. Note the activities of the recipients of the Gospel from the verse noted below:
 - a. v. 6
 - b. v. 7
 - c. v. 8
 - d. v. 9
 - e. v. 10
 - i. What are the evidences of repentance that we see in vv. 9 & 10?
3. Three outgrowths of the Lord's working among the believers in Thessalonica are mentioned in v. 3. What are they?
4. Gospel reception and perseverance in the midst of opposition are in view in v. 6. Who were the Thessalonians following in this regard and to whom did they become an example?

Third Reading – What are the “take aways” from the text as to how we should live?

The power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ comes clearly into view in this week's text. From what we see in 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10:

1. Regarding Gospel proclamation—when you share the Gospel what should you prayerfully expect the Lord to do?
2. Regarding Gospel reception—what are some evidences of the power of the Gospel that you can expect when the Gospel message is received?
3. What encourages you to share the Gospel from this text?
4. Write out any prayer requests that come to mind as you read this text for application to your life. If you haven't already done so, you might want to begin the HTC 3-1-2 program having studied this passage! (*Praying for 3 friends or family members—with the hope that God will use me to lead 1 of them to Christ in the next 2 years.*)

Summarize the passage:

What is the **primary emphasis** of the passage (i.e., a sentence that captures the timeless essence of the passage)?

How might the primary emphasis of the passage **apply to the lives of Christians today** (i.e., how should you respond to this passage in thought and behavior)?

Prayer requests

Study #3: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Week 3 - **Week of April 26th**

Community Group calendar: **Study #3**

Text: **1 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

Ways in which you will interact with the text:

- Personal study
- Listen to sermon preached on April 25th from 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12
- Group discussion during week of April 26th

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (ESV)

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. [2] But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. [3] For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, [4] 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. [5] For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed— God is witness. [6] Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. [7] But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. [8] 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.

[9] 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. [10] You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. [11] For you know how, like a father with his children, [12] 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.

First Reading – What does the text tell us about God?

Use a marker to underline or circle the times that “God” is mentioned in this week’s text. What number did you come up with? (_____) Ponder the following things from the text about God.

1. He enabled Paul to be bold for the Gospel in spite of mistreatment because of the Gospel! (v. 2)
2. The Lord’s stamp of approval was on Paul to be entrusted with the treasure of the Gospel! (v. 4)
3. God tests hearts! (v. 4)
4. What else specifically comes into view about God from this week’s verses?

Second Reading –What does the text tell us about people/ourselves?

This week’s text also highlights Paul’s ministry among the Thessalonians. It demonstrates the degree to which messengers of the Gospel are to complement the message of the Gospel. There are at least 10 characteristics that complement the Gospel message. Several are listed below, see if you can come up with more.

- | | |
|-------------------------|----|
| a. Boldness (v. 2) | f. |
| b. Purity/honest (v. 3) | g. |
| c. Trustworthy (v. 4) | h. |
| d. Genuine (v. 5) | i. |
| e. | j. |
2. Which of the characteristics of the apostle Paul noted in the text are you intrigued by? Why?
 3. Why is it important that the life, character and actions of the messenger are consistent with the Gospel message s/he carries?

Third Reading – What are the “take aways” from the text as to how we should live?

1. We must be careful to live in ways that are consistent with the Gospel message that we share.
2. As you consider the things that characterized Paul’s Gospel witness, consider honestly what things characterize yours. What might be lacking?

3. Write out any prayer requests that come to mind as you read this text for application to your life and use the passage to inform your prayers! Need more boldness, make it a matter of prayer. Need more gentleness, take it to the Lord in prayer, etc.

Summarize the passage:

What is the **primary emphasis** of the passage (i.e., a sentence that captures the timeless essence of the passage)?

How might the primary emphasis of the passage **apply to the lives of Christians today** (i.e., how should you respond to this passage in thought and behavior)?

Prayer requests

Study #4: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

Week 4 – **Week of May 3rd**

Community Group calendar: **Study #4**

Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

Ways in which you will interact with the text:

- Personal study
- Listen to sermon preached May 2nd from **1 Thessalonians 2:13-16**
- Group discussion during week of May 3rd

1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 (ESV)

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. [14] For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, [15] who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind [16] by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But God's wrath has come upon them at last!

First Reading – What does the text tell us about God?

1. Why did Paul offer thanksgiving to the Lord in v. 13?
2. How do the concepts of “God’s word received,” “God’s word resisted,” and “God’s wrath resting” come into play in this week’s text?
3. What was it about the countrymen of the Thessalonians that “displease[d] God” (v. 15)?

Second Reading –What does the text tell us about people/ourselves?

1. What kinds of human activity come into view in 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16? (Compare these verses with Acts 17:1-9.)

2. How does “the word of God” differ from “the word of men”? How should one’s response differ when responding to man’s words versus God’s words?
3. What in the language of the text demonstrates the respect that the Thessalonians had for God’s word?
4. Compare 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 with Mark 4:13-20. Which of the kinds of soil best describes the Thessalonian believers?
5. What was so ironic about the source of the opposition noted in vv. 14b-16?

Third Reading – What are the “take aways” from the text as to how we should live?

1. How might this text help us to respond to God’s word more appropriately? (See James 1:19-25.)
2. Ponder: *To what degree is God’s word at work in me as a believer?*
3. Ponder: *Do I honor God’s word as God’s word or simply as the “word of men”?*
4. Ponder: *Believers and churches who ACCEPT God’s word as God’s word will be candidates for opposition. Am I/are we prepared to take a stand even if it costs?*
5. Write out any prayer requests that come to mind as you read this text for application to your life.

Summarize the passage:

What is the **primary emphasis** of the passage (i.e., a sentence that captures the timeless essence of the passage)?

How might the primary emphasis of the passage **apply to the lives of Christians today** (i.e., how should you respond to this passage in thought and behavior)?

Prayer requests
