



LESSON ONE

Kingdom Church

Intro to 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Thessalonica was located on the Gulf of the Northern Aegean Sea. Originally, the city was the capital of Macedonia until 168 B.C. Paul visited Thessalonica around 49 A.D. and wrote 1 & 2 Thessalonians sometime between 49-52 A.D. (Caleb accidentally misspoke in the video and said 49-52 B.C) The population was around 200,000 whereas the modern-day city, Thessaloniki, has a population of over 1 million people. Thessalonica was a significant city the Roman Empire for several reasons. First, Thessalonica was a free city, meaning the city was governed by the people. Second, it was a gulf city on the northern side of Greece that was known for its trade and trade routes. Third, though many people in the city were financially secure, Thessalonica was predominantly "middle class." Finally, the city was religiously diverse as residents worshipped Egyptian gods, Roman gods, Northern Aegean Gulf gods, and more.

1. Would it be a good idea if someone imitated you (wanted to be exactly like you)? Why or why not? If not, are there areas of your life that others would benefit from imitating? If so, what are one or more of those areas?

2. Ask someone in your group to read Acts 17:1-9 (the background of the church in Thessalonica). Who are the main characters in this passage? What were Paul and his crew preaching? What was the conflict? How did God use this story for His glory?

3. Some main themes that Paul wrote about in 1 & 2 Thessalonians were Christ's return, correct theology, encouraging believers who were suffering & being persecuted, working diligently, loving people well, and holy living. If you had to choose one of these 6 themes that you need to work on or grow in your understanding of, which would it be and why?

4. A popular cult in Thessalonica worshipped a god known as Cabirus. This god was a representative of the working class and was based off of a young man who lived hundreds of years earlier. The young man was unjustly killed, and cult members believed he would return one day and reward his worshippers. What are the parallels you notice between Cabirus and Jesus? How might an understanding of Cabirus make it easier for the Thessalonians to believe in Jesus?

5. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2:9; 3:2; 4:11; and 2 Thessalonians 3:10. List the different things that Paul says about the idea of “work” or “labor” in these verses. Since the Thessalonian society valued “work” so much, how does Paul leverage the idea of “work” to connect with the Thessalonian believers?

6. How well do you function under pressure? How do you handle your emotions during suffering?

7. The title “Lord Jesus” appears 11 times in 1 Thessalonians and 12 times in 2 Thessalonians. In your opinion, why does Paul use this title for Jesus instead of other titles? What might Paul’s title for Jesus tell us about 1 & 2 Thessalonians?

Questions and Ideas to Reflect on This Week:

- This week, try to read 1 Thessalonians two or three times in different translations (NIV, ESV, NLT, NCV, The Message, NKJV, NASB, etc.)
- Try memorizing 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6.
- Take some time to reflect and write down what you hope to gain from this series.