

A SMALL GROUP STUDY

1 THESSALONIANS

Tom Holladay



drivetime
DEVOTIONS

1 THESSALONIANS: A SMALL GROUP STUDY

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ABOUT DRIVETIME DEVOTIONS SMALL GROUP STUDIES

Welcome to this special Drivetime Devotions, small group study. This five-week study is designed so that you can enjoy Drivetime Devotions as a podcast throughout the week and then talk about it with your small group. This will allow for more time in your small group for discussion, application, and fellowship.

The purpose of Drivetime Devotions is to help you know God's Word and put it into practice. Here at Saddleback Church, we believe it's better to study small sections of God's Word each day instead of a larger section once a week. Studying the Bible is like eating—you'll be healthier if you eat small amounts each day rather than one big meal a week! Episodes are designed to be listened to once per day, five days a week. In the event you miss a day or two, you can still stay on schedule.

In Drivetime Devotions, Pastor Tom Holladay teaches God's Word and helps you put it into practice. With over 30 million downloads, Drivetime Devotions has built a reputation for changing lives and helping people grow closer to God. There are three ways you can access this podcast study on 1 Thessalonians:

1. Click on the link at the start of each session of this study guide.
2. Download the Drivetime Devotions app to your phone or tablet. Go to "Devotions" and select "1 Thessalonians."
3. Go to drivetimedevotions.com/devotions/1thessalonians.

HELPFUL TIP

Depending on your device settings, you may need to select the PLAY BUTTON  or the UNMUTE BUTTON  on the Drivetime audio player when it is fully loaded.



HOW TO USE THIS INTERACTIVE STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed to be used as a downloaded file on your tablet or phone. You do not need to print it out unless you want to. Throughout the guide, you will see areas where you can type directly into the guide. There are also convenient links that direct you to external resources, including Scripture passages on BibleGateway.com.

HELPFUL TIP

For the best experience on Android™ platforms, please view this interactive study on Adobe Acrobat Reader DC®.





A FEW TIPS BEFORE YOU DIG IN



LISTEN

Prepare yourself before each study by listening to each week's five daily podcast episodes (one per day).



CHECKING IN

Open each meeting with a time for everyone to check in on each other's progress with the podcast. Accountability is a key to success in this study!



KEY VERSE

Each week you will find a key verse (or verses) from the chapter you are studying. You may want to memorize this verse together as a group.



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

These are questions for group discussion. Please don't feel pressured to discuss every single question. The material in this study is meant to be your servant, not your master. Therefore there is no reason to rush through your discussions. Give everyone ample time to share their thoughts.

Some questions will reference the verses from which they are taken. Many groups will want to have someone read those verses accompanying the question. There is something powerful about hearing the Bible read aloud together as a group.



LIVING ON PURPOSE

This section helps you encourage each other in balancing God's five purposes of evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship. Each week, there will be a prayer, practical action, or personal assignment that focuses on one of these purposes.



PRAYING TOGETHER

At the end of each session you will find suggestions for your group prayer time. Praying together is one of the greatest privileges of small group life. Please don't take it for granted.

Get ready for God to do incredible things in your life as you begin the adventure of learning more deeply about the most exciting message in the world: the truth about God!



TELL A FRIEND

As you go through each session, the Holy Spirit may bring to mind different people in your life. You may even want to write their names down beside a point, phrase, or verse in the margins. Take the opportunity to share God's Word in a friend's life during the week.



WEEK ONE: 1 Thessalonians 1



LISTEN

Use this space below to type any notes or thoughts you may have had while listening.



CHECKING IN

1. If you are just starting together as a group, go around the room and share your name, where you grew up, and something about your life.
2. The first and second letter to the Thessalonians are written to newer believers, showing them how to live the life that Jesus promised. How does that make you look forward to a study of these books?



KEY VERSE

We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NIV84)



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to you to live in a “climate” of grace, peace, and thanksgiving? Verses 1–2
2. What work is your faith producing, what labor is your love prompting, and what endurance is your hope inspiring? Verse 3
3. Do you ever struggle with knowing whether or not you are truly saved? What strengthens your assurance of God’s love? Verses 4–5

4. Have you had an experience like the Thessalonians, where “in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with great joy”? Verses 5–8
5. What are the idols that you have turned from or must keep choosing to turn from? Verses 9–10



LIVING ON PURPOSE

Worship

To deepen your assurance of God’s love, take some time to read together some of the passages in Scripture that most strongly give us that assurance. Ask the group to share what verses come to mind. Here are a few to get you started:

- Romans 8:1
- Psalm 46:1–3
- John 10:27–30
- Isaiah 54:10
- 2 Corinthians 4:16–18
- Romans 8:37–39



PRAYING TOGETHER

Pray for God to deepen your faith as your group does this study.

WEEK ONE



TELL A FRIEND

Look back through the study guide above and highlight a point, phrase, or verse that you would like to share with somebody this week.



WEEK TWO: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16



LISTEN

Use this space below to type any notes or thoughts you may have had while listening:



CHECKING IN

1. After our study last week, have there been any ways that you experienced an assurance of God's love?
2. Who are some people God has given you to give of yourself right now?



KEY VERSE

We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 (NIV84)



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

1. Paul tells the church in Thessalonica how his ministry was not based on things like impure motives, manipulation, flattery, or praise from people. Instead, his ministry was based on things that last (see 1 Corinthians 3:12-15). Is there something in this list that causes you to think about some changes you need to make? Verses 1-6
2. Is there something in the passage that encourages you and confirms you are basing your life on things that last? (e.g., courage, the gospel, pleasing God)? Verses 1-6
3. How does God give you the strength to love, care for, and work hard for people? Verses 6-9

4. Being holy, righteous, and blameless can sound like an impossible challenge. How have you seen God strengthen you to begin living that kind of life? Verses 10–12



LIVING ON PURPOSE

Ministry

As you end this study and pray together, pray for those God has given your group care and influence over. Whether it's people in your family, church, school, neighborhood, or work—ask specifically that God would show his love to them through you.



PRAYING TOGETHER

Have each person in your group share an area of your life or ministry where you need encouragement to not give up. Take turns praying for those areas.



TELL A FRIEND

Look back through the study guide above and highlight a point, phrase, or verse that you would like to share with somebody this week.



WEEK THREE: 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:13



LISTEN

Use this space below to type any notes or thoughts you may have had while listening.



CHECKING IN

1. How did you engage with last week's Living on Purpose?
2. When it comes to your emotional responses, would you consider yourself to be more of a "skunk" or a "turtle"?



KEY VERSE

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

1 Thessalonians 3:12



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

1. Describe a time when you have felt the emotion of intense longing while serving God in ministry. Verses 2:17; 3:1
2. Describe a time when you have felt the emotion of fear while serving God in ministry. Verse 3:5
3. Describe a time when you have felt the emotion of encouragement while serving God in ministry. Verses 3:6-7
4. Describe a time when you have felt the emotion of stress while serving God in ministry. Verses 3:3-4, 7

WEEK THREE

5. Describe a time when you have felt the emotion of joy while serving God in ministry. Verses 2:19–20; 3:8–9
6. Which of the four encouragements for prayer would you like to work on? Verses 3:10–13
 - Pray frequently.
 - Pray earnestly.
 - Pray specifically.
 - Pray with the ultimate end in mind.



LIVING ON PURPOSE

Fellowship

Take some time to talk about how you could continuously support one another in the emotions we face as we serve others. What are some practical ways you can share the highs and the lows of ministry with each other? Some groups might use text messaging, others a social media group, and others partnering with another person in the group for regular phone calls.



PRAYING TOGETHER

Pray for God to strengthen you in the intense longing, fear, and stress that you shared with one another during this group. And praise God for the encouragement and joy that he gives us.



TELL A FRIEND

Look back through the study guide above and highlight a point, phrase, or verse that you would like to share with somebody this week.



WEEK FOUR: 1 Thessalonians 4



LISTEN

Use this space below to type any notes or thoughts you may have had while listening:



CHECKING IN

1. What have been some of your biggest takeaways from this study so far?
2. In the past week, how did you experience the “emotions of ministry” that we talked about in our last study?



KEY VERSE

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Thessalonians 4:16



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to you to “excel still more” in the ways that you live to please God? Verses 1–3
2. What strengthens you to live a holy life in an unholy world? Verses 3–8
3. How does Paul’s definition of ambition in these verses (to lead a quiet life, to attend to your own business, to work with your own hands) affect your thinking? Verses 9–12
4. Does the truth of the second coming cause you to have feelings of anxiety, apathy, or anticipation? Verses 13–16

WEEK FOUR

5. How does the truth of the second coming of Christ give you encouragement for your day today? Verses 16–18



LIVING ON PURPOSE

Evangelism

Make a plan this next week for how you could be a better witness for Christ at your work—starting with how you do your work and how you treat the other people at work.



PRAYING TOGETHER

Take a moment for each of you to share one way the group could be praying for you right now, and then pray for one another.



TELL A FRIEND

Look back through the study guide above and highlight a point, phrase, or verse that you would like to share with somebody this week.



WEEK FIVE: 1 Thessalonians 5



LISTEN

Use this space below to type any notes or thoughts you may have had while listening:



CHECKING IN

1. How did your plan for being a better witness at work go this week?
2. In what specific ways are you looking forward to God continuing your growth?



KEY VERSES

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

1. How can you live today in such a way that anticipates Jesus' return? Verses 1–3
2. What does Jesus' return mean to you, and how does it affect your daily life to "be alert"? Verses 4–11
3. Is there some specific way you need to warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, or be patient with someone? Ask the group to pray for you to have the strength to do this. Verses 12–14
4. What circumstance are you currently facing where you need to be joyful always, pray continually, and give thanks? Verses 15–18

What does the promise, “He will do it,” mean to you right now? Verses 19–28



LIVING ON PURPOSE

Discipleship

This is a chapter that is filled with next steps for our growth in Christ. Take a look at the list below, and choose just one area where you will make a renewed commitment to depend on God and choose to grow.

- Respect your spiritual leaders.
- Live in peace with one another.
- Be patient with everyone.
- Never pay back wrong for wrong.
- Be kind to everyone.
- Be joyful always.
- Pray continually.
- Give thanks in all circumstances.
- Do not quench the Spirit.
- Do not treat prophecies with contempt.
- Test everything, and hold on to the good.
- Avoid every kind of evil.

WEEK FIVE



PRAYING TOGETHER

Take some time as a group to talk about your specific prayer requests and to pray for one another.



TELL A FRIEND

Look back through this week's study and highlight a point, phrase, or verse that you would like to share with somebody this week.

NEXT STEPS

DRIVETIME DEVOTIONS: JOHN VOLUMES I, II, III SMALL GROUP STUDY

This 21-week study on the Book of John is divided into three separate volumes. This collection of studies is designed for you to enjoy Drivetime Devotions as a podcast throughout the week and then talk about it with your small group. This will allow for more time in your small group for discussion, application, and fellowship.



PUTTING IT TOGETHER AGAIN WHEN IT'S ALL FALLEN APART

Walk through Pastor Tom's book together for seven weeks and follow the small group study guide provided with the book. This study will help teach you principles for rebuilding your life. Books are available for purchase at Pastors.com.



FOUNDATIONS

Written by Tom Holladay and Kay Warren, *Foundations* teaches 11 core truths of the Christian faith. Choose individual topics such as "The Bible" or "Creation," or walk through the entire course using video teaching from Tom and Kay. Study guides are available at Pastors.com and all Foundations videos are available at saddleback.com/foundationsonline. You can also look for Foundations classes taught live at a Saddleback campus near you.



