

**CORE COMPETENCIES**

**Core Beliefs**

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

**Core Practices**

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

**Core Virtues**

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- **Hope**  
**“I can cope with the hardships of life and death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.”**
- Humility

**Monday**

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to give you insight into His Word.

Read I Thessalonians 1:1-10.

Paul visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. Open this link to view a map of Paul's journey: <http://www.biblestudy.org/maps/pauls-secd-journey-map.html>

Use the map to answer the following questions:

In which modern day country is Thessalonica located?

What was significant about Thessalonica's location that made it a strategic stop on Paul's journey?

*'The population of Thessalonica in New Testament times was most likely around 200,000. Most of its inhabitants were native Greeks, but many Romans, East Asians and Jews also inhabited the city.*

*Thessalonica was built near an ancient hot spring on the northwest coast of the Aegean Sea. In the Apostle Paul's day it was the chief seaport of the Roman province of Macedonia. It was a main shipping port and also was a stop along the Egnation Way, the main Roman road from Rome to the Orient. This made it a strategic location both governmentally and militarily.*

*During the time of Paul the Romans ruled Thessalonica with a loose hand; though the Roman proconsul (governor) lived there, no Roman troops were stationed in the city, and the people were allowed to govern themselves as in a Greek city-state.' (Summarized from: The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Eds. Walvoord J. and Zuck, R. 1983.)*

Who traveled with Paul to Thessalonica?

Read Acts 15:36-16:5 for a description of how these three came together as a missionary team.

Read Acts 17:1-9. Where did Paul begin his ministry in Thessalonica?

What were the major points of theology that he taught?

Who came to Christ through Paul's ministry?

What was the response of the Jews to Paul's ministry?

Close your time in prayer. Ask that God would give you insight into the book of Thessalonians as you study this week and that you would be obedient to His prompting.

**Tuesday**

Read I Thessalonians 1:2-3.

Paul, Timothy and Silas are thankful for what three growing character traits in the lives of the Thessalonian believers?

Read I Thessalonians 1. In these verses, what evidence is given of these three character traits:

- Work produced by faith:
- Labor prompted by love:
- Endurance inspired by hope:

What evidence have you seen of these three characteristics growing recently in your own life?

Paul states that they are continually praying for the Thessalonian believers, remembering them before God. Close your time in prayer for other believers in your life. Thank God for the works of faith and labor prompted by love that you have seen in their life. Pray for endurance that is inspired by hope in Jesus Christ.

## Wednesday

Read I Thessalonians 1:1-5. Reread verses 4-5.

How did they know that the Thessalonian believers were truly brothers in Christ, chosen by God?

These verses indicate that it is not simply enough to understand the words of the gospel, but that the gospel will produce ongoing change when it is truly at work.

Since you have become a believer what evidence have you seen of the Holy Spirit's work of deep conviction in your life?

Ask God to help you be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's prompting in your life. Spend a few moments in silence.

What areas of your life have you sensed the Holy Spirit at work convicting you recently? How have you responded to this conviction from the Holy Spirit?

Celebrate this growth and thank God for this work in your life!

Close your time in prayer asking God to help you continually submit to the Holy Spirit's ongoing work of guiding you into spiritual transformation.

## Thursday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to help you focus on His Word and keep you free from distraction.

Read I Thessalonians 1:1-6.

For what actions does Paul commend the Thessalonian believers in verse 6?

*"The outstanding fruit of faith in the gospel was the Thessalonians' change of behavior. They **became imitators** of their spiritual parents, Paul, Timothy and Silas. This is normal Christian experience. But they also went on to imitate **the Lord**. Often a new Christian first looks to other believers as his pattern, but then as he matures realizes that Jesus Christ is the best model."* (Taken from: The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Eds. Walvoord J. and Zuck, R. 1983.)

Who were the believers you looked up to when you first came to faith? What part of their faith did you emulate?

What young believer is in your life looking up to you, emulating your faith? How can you best reflect Christ to this person and encourage them to look to Christ for the perfect model?

With Jesus as the perfect model for living the Christian life, what are several areas in which you have recently experienced transformation and look more like Christ? Celebrate this growth!

Ask God to show you several specific areas that need to be further transformed? What next steps can you take with God to pursue this transformation?

## Friday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to use your transformed life to impact the world around you.

Read I Thessalonians 1:1-10. Reread verses 7-10.

God had used the brand new church in Thessalonica to impact people for Christ not just in neighboring provinces, but *everywhere*. Their obedience to Christ and willingness to pursue changed lives had become a concrete message of the power of the gospel to all.

The church can have significant impact on our world when we live lives that are individually surrendered and corporately submitted to God. The church in Thessalonica was a powerful testimony of God because the world saw a community whose lives had been absolutely transformed.

Close your time in prayer for our church, using the guide below. Pray for...

- God to reveal the idols from which we need to turn and the willingness to turn from them.
- a deeper understanding and realization of God as the *living and true* God.
- a church that eagerly awaits our Savior, Jesus, and His return.
- a church that has significant impact on our neighboring communities and the world for the sake of the gospel.