

The Background of 1 Thessalonians

The Location:

- Paul wrote the letter from Corinth—on the SE corner of the Aegean Sea.
- Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica—on the NE corner of the Aegean Sea.

The Year, author (Paul), Author (Holy Spirit), and Situation:

- The church was established by Paul on the 2nd Missionary Journey.
- The account of the establishment of the church is found in Acts 17:1-10.
- Paul began his outreach in the synagogue with the Jewish people. Rom 1:16, 17.
- The year of writing the letter is AD 50 or 51.
- Some people believed and embraced Christ.
- Some people disbelieved, rejected Christ, formed a mob, and ran Paul off.

Their City and Our City:

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| Egnation Way | I-45 and I-10 |
| 200,000 people | 4.5 million people |
| Splendid harbor | Ship Channel |
| Gateway to Macedonia | Gateway to Texas |
| Native Greeks, Romans, Orientals, Asiatics, Jews. | 100 languages spoken as first language |
| Mostly idolaters | 88% unchurched |
| A “Free City” | A “Free City” |
| An influential city | An influential city |

Paul’s Relationship with the Church in Thessalonica:

- Paul has terrific compassion for the believers in Thessalonica.
- Paul sends Timothy to find out how they are doing.
- Paul rejoices at the good report that Timothy brings back.
- Paul has tender love for them like a mother and firm truth for them like a father (1 Thessalonians 2:1-10).

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The Purposes of 1 Thessalonians—why the Holy Spirit had Paul write the Book (taken from D. Edmond Hiebert in *1 & 2 Thessalonians* on pages 25, 26):

- ...to record Paul's joy over the good report from Timothy about the Thessalonians.
- ...to refute false and slanderous charges against Paul and his fellow missionaries.
- ...to meet specific needs in the church at Thessalonica.
 - "Be careful about your former heathen vices and remember the superiority of Christianity over paganism."
 - "Be careful to continue loving the believers—your brothers and sisters."
 - "Do honest, industrious work."
 - "Understand the events surrounding the return of the Lord and the security of those who have died in Christ."
 - "Be personally and diligently watchful for the return of Jesus."
 - "Be respectful toward your leaders in the church and live in unity within the structure of the church."
 - "Live a life of utter holiness."

Note Well! 1 Thessalonians deals with both the choices of us as individual believers and with corporate church/Body realities.

- God expects great obedience and striving from us as individual believers as we pursue spiritual growth and maturity and impact. 1 Thessalonians deals with this. As individuals we want to hear "Well done good and faithful servant."
- God also expects great involvement from us as we contribute our part to the local Body of Christ. He expects great things of us as a united Body. 1 Thessalonians deals with this also. As a local church we want to hear "Well done good and faithful Church."



“New Decision, New People”

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Why, in AD 50, was 1 Thessalonians written? Please see Background Page.

Have you ever seen a person radically transformed?

The “Spiritual Chain of Events” in the people at Thessalonica:

- #1 They were spiritually dead, serving idols, and utterly helpless.
- #2 They were chosen by God.
- #3 The Gospel came to them in power and the Holy Spirit and full conviction.
- #4 They heard the Gospel and received the message and trusted Christ.
- #5 They were radically transformed—personally and spiritually.
- #6 They threw themselves into the service of the living God.

Core Truth: Authentic reception of the Gospel and trust in Jesus...leads to radical transformation in our lives—in who we are and in how we serve others.

So What? We have the resources in Christ to:

... be *radically better people* than we are!

... be *radically more influential people* than we are!

... be *radically more influential as a corporate Body* than we are!

... *begin a radical journey of personal transformation through praying and taking specific personal initiative.*

With God’s help I will: _____

“Walking Papers”

Practical helps for walking the Christian walk each day this week.

Core Truth: Authentic reception of the Gospel and trust in Jesus...leads to radical transformation in our lives—in who we are and in how we serve others.

Please read: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 each day this week.

- **Today.** Where are you on the foundational decision about Jesus Christ? Have you trusted Him for the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of eternal life? If so please reflect on that decision and the changes that happened then. If you have not trusted Christ is there anything keeping you from trusting Christ right now?
- **Monday.** Please list and reflect on the areas of your life where you are not satisfied—where you need growth and transformation.
- **Tuesday.** Please describe how life could be better in each of the areas you listed yesterday. What would life look like if it were radically improved in each of these areas?
- **Wednesday.** Please reflect on the radical changes in the lives of the Thessalonians. That same spiritual power is available to us—right at our grasp in the Person of the Holy Spirit, the power of the Word of God, the opportunity for repentance, submission, new decisions, new resolve to pursue God, and new vision for what life might be if we were each radically sold out to Christ.
- **Thursday.** Please consider how you could contribute to the radical growth, courage, transformation, impact, and relational connections at Cypress Bible Church. What will you do to “raise the bar” in your contribution to the Body?
- **Friday.** A big part of the victory in the church at Thessalonica was the prayer of Paul for that Body. Will you please pray, for at least 30 minutes, for Cypress Bible Church today?
- **Saturday.** In preparation for worship tomorrow please read 1 Thess 2:1-12.

Note for Connection Groups: The full study guide for small group and personal study is available at: www.cypressbible.org (Quick Menu / Connect / Sermon Based Small Group Material.