

# Our Hope in Christ

*A Chapter Analysis Study of 1 Thessalonians*

DESIGN FOR DISCIPLESHIP

# DFD7



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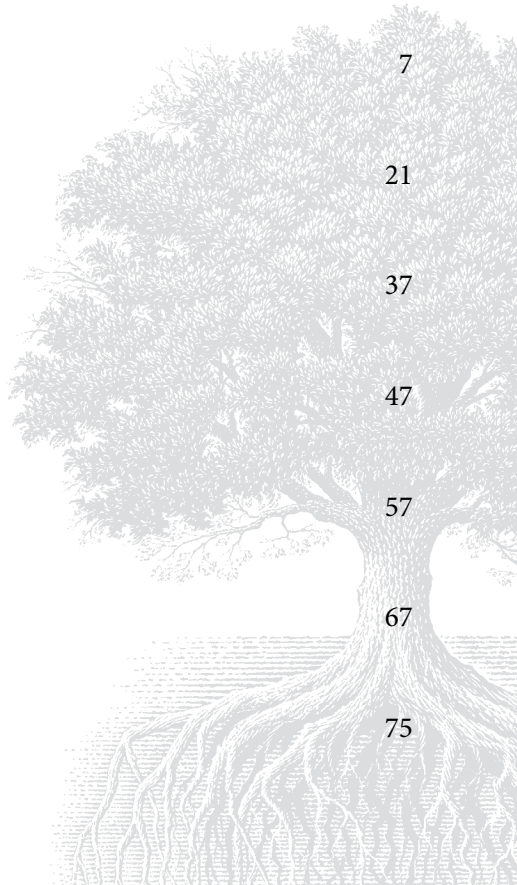
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# DFD7 | CONTENTS

Lifetime Adventure	5
CHAPTER 1:	
1 Thessalonians: Your Survey	7
CHAPTER 2:	
1 Thessalonians: Chapter 1	21
CHAPTER 3:	
1 Thessalonians: Chapter 2	37
CHAPTER 4:	
1 Thessalonians: Chapter 3	47
CHAPTER 5:	
1 Thessalonians: Chapter 4	57
CHAPTER 6:	
1 Thessalonians: Chapter 5	67
CHAPTER 7:	
1 Thessalonians: Your Summary	75



## LIFETIME ADVENTURE

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

ROMANS 15:4



In giving us His written word, the Bible, God longs to encourage us. He invites us into the exhilarating adventure of personal Bible study to fill us with hope. As the Lord fills our minds with His truth, He also ushers us into more intimate fellowship with Him — fellowship that satisfies our hearts and changes our lives.

In *Our Hope in Christ*, Book Seven of *Design for Discipleship*, you will learn how to study New Testament books chapter by chapter. You will gain an understanding of Bible study principles and methods. Each chapter will highlight a different study skill or resource that will equip you to continue to explore the Bible for yourself as a lifetime habit.

The method you'll use in studying 1 Thessalonians can be termed "book analysis." It is a different type of Bible study that will involve your own firsthand research. Your study will include three basic steps.

First is a **Survey** of the entire book. Rather than concentrate on particular details, you will work to gain a broad overview of the whole.

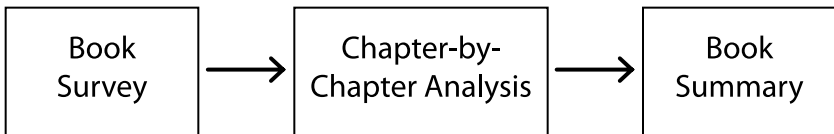
Next you will do a **Chapter-by-Chapter Analysis** of 1 Thessalonians. Your aim here is to study the five chapters separately, focusing on the specific truths and insights which you will discover in each chapter.

Third is a **Summary** of 1 Thessalonians. After studying the five chapters in detail, you will now pull together what you have learned and write down your conclusions. In developing your summary, many of you will express yourself through writing, but some of you may find it easier to express yourself in a different manner (drawing, poetry). Please feel free to develop a creative summary in a manner that clearly communicates what you are learning.

Ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance as you work on each step. Psalm 119:34 is a good prayer: "Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart."

You will probably find it best not to refer to Bible commentaries until after you have completed your study of each chapter. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you directly from the Scriptures.

## Book Analysis



C H A P T E R

1

# 1 Thessalonians: Your Survey

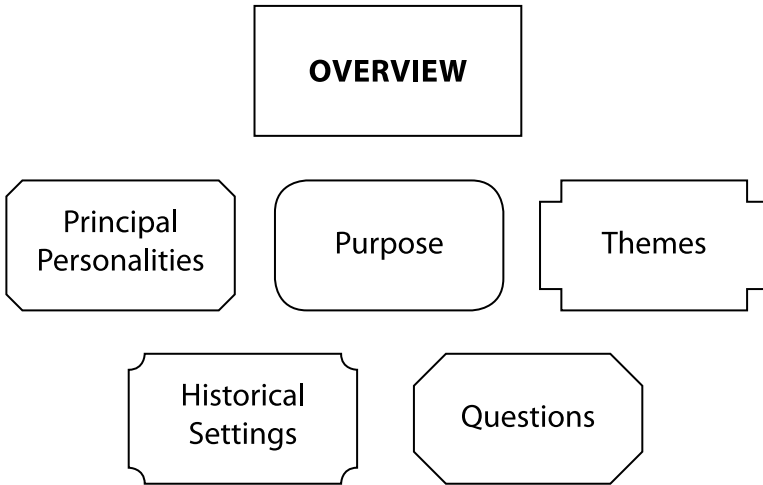
**T**he purpose of surveying a book you want to study is to gain a broad overview of its setting and themes. As you survey 1 Thessalonians, you will be laying a valuable foundation for the discoveries you make later when you study each chapter in detail. Do your best now to gain a good understanding of the background and general themes of this book.

The most important thing you can do to become familiar with 1 Thessalonians is simply to read it over and over again thoughtfully. In most Bibles, Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians is only three to five pages long. So it will only take a few minutes to read through the book without stopping. This is a good time to read the book from different Bible translations and paraphrases. Also try reading the book aloud at least once. Many people enjoy listening to the book on tape as well, because sometimes we notice things when we hear them that we missed while reading silently.

Keep track here of how many times you read through 1 Thessalonians: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading becomes studying when you add pen and paper and begin to take notes on what you are learning. It may be helpful for you to photocopy 1 Thessalonians from your preferred translation so that you can mark it up freely as you study. Your written book survey will contain six main sections: principal personalities, historical setting, purpose, themes, questions, and an overview.

## Book Survey





## HISTORICAL SETTING

Thessalonica — the modern-day city of Salonika in Greece — is first mentioned in the Bible in Acts 17:1-13. Read this passage to answer questions 3-5.

3. When Paul arrived in Thessalonica, where did he begin to preach?

4. What message did Paul give to the Thessalonians?

## 5. Describe the various responses in Thessalonica to Paul's teaching.



### **STUDY SKILL #1:**

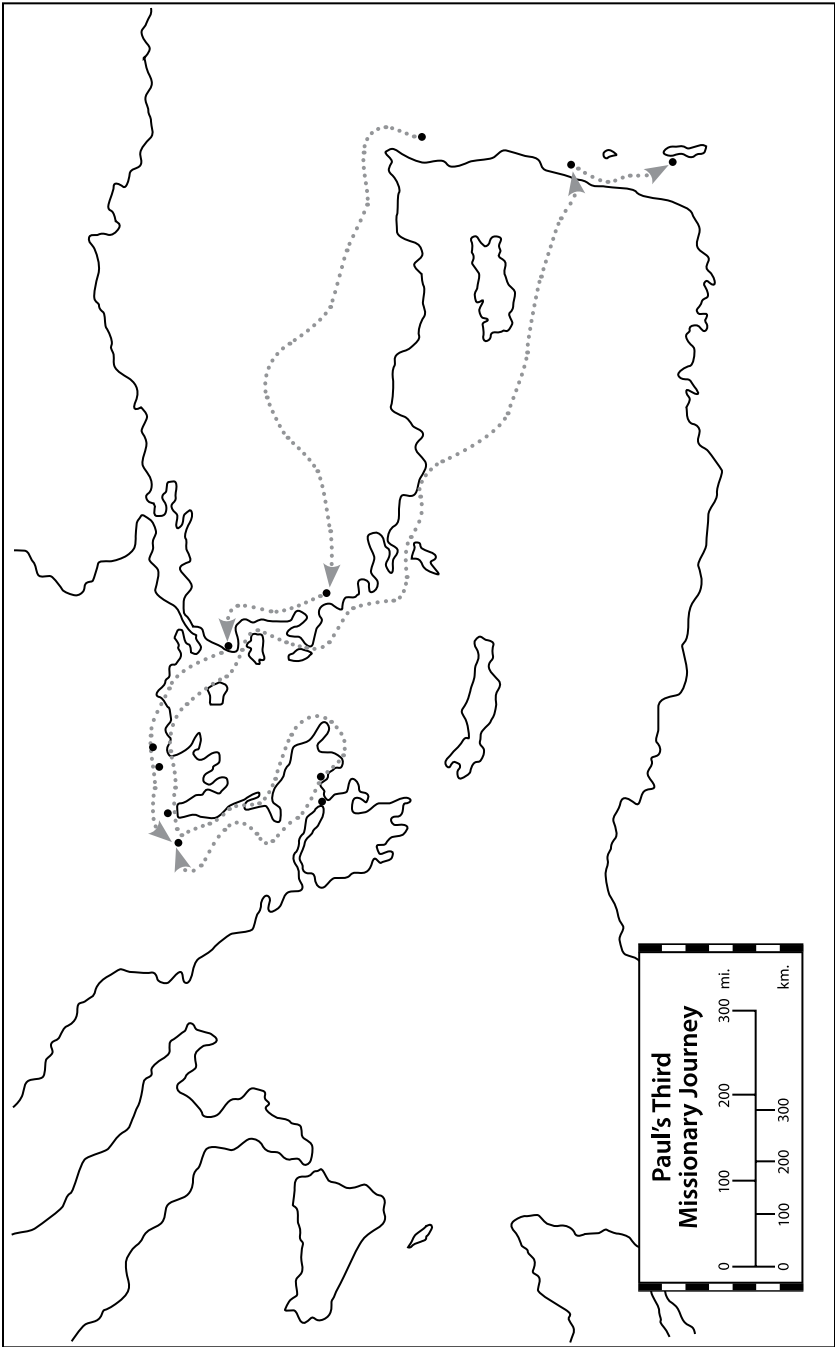
#### *Discovering Historical and Geographical Background*

Try to get a sense of where these historical events occurred by locating and writing the names of key cities, regions/provinces, and other geographical places on the map on the next page. Rather than provide a completed map, we invite you to do your own research. Consult a Bible atlas, maps at the back of a study Bible, or online resources such as [www.gospelcom.net](http://www.gospelcom.net), [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com), or [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com) to locate the places listed below.

**REGIONS:** Thracia, Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, Galatia

**CITIES:** Thessalonica, Philippi, Amphipolis, Appolia, Berea, Philippi, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus

**OTHER:** Aegean Sea, Crete



6. Record here what else you learn from reference books (such as Bible dictionaries, study Bibles, and encyclopedias) about the historical background of Thessalonica, the church there, and this letter.

## PURPOSE

7. From your own reading of 1 Thessalonians and from reference books, what reasons can you give for Paul writing this letter? Consider questions he tried to answer, circumstances that the Thessalonians were facing, needs he responded to, and possible problems he addressed to help you determine his purpose.

## THEMES

8. What major themes of this letter stand out to you?

9. What are some of the secondary themes you find?

10. List key words that occur frequently and other important words in 1 Thessalonians. Consider marking each key word with a different color marker to help you trace themes visually through the book.

“ People whose lives are oriented around Christ don’t just study the Bible to be smarter. They see that every single page of [his Word] is stained with the crimson blood of Jesus himself. Suddenly, the Bible isn’t just a text to be studied but a source of life for a withering branch.

—Eric Sandras, PhD, *Buck-Naked Faith*

## QUESTIONS

11. What questions have surfaced as you surveyed 1 Thessalonians? These might reflect topics that arouse your curiosity, topics you want to learn more about, terms or facts to clarify, or things that confuse you. Write them here as you read and study.

## OVERVIEW

In the overview section of your book survey, your aim is to summarize the book concisely by writing a brief outline. As a starting point you may want to refer to the paragraph/section headings included in most translations or to outlines given in study Bibles. But remember that chapter divisions and verse numbers and subtopics were not included in the original documents; they were added later to help locate particular passages. So feel free to organize your outline in any way that makes sense to you.

For example, the last four verses in chapter 2 express Paul's longing to see the Thessalonians, the same theme he continues into chapter 3. So you may want to study 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:13 as one unit.

Under each heading you choose, use either short phrases or summary sentences to describe the various parts of the book. Try to keep your outline brief for now.

It may seem difficult at this point to prepare an adequate outline. But the exercise will help you gain an overall view of the book when you later study each chapter more thoroughly. At the close of your study of 1 Thessalonians you will have the opportunity to review the whole book again, and to revise your outline if necessary.

12. Use the following space to write your survey outline of 1 Thessalonians.

Close your overview by writing a brief title for the whole book of 1 Thessalonians that captures its central heart and message for you. Also select one or two verses that you consider key to the whole book. Spend some time meditating, memorizing, and praying over your key verse.

13. BOOK TITLE:

14. KEY VERSE(S):



## MY JOURNAL

Remember that the study of God's living Word is a journey into the heart and mind of God. As you reflect on 1 Thessalonians, what are some key ideas revealed about the heart and mind of God?

While you may choose to write out these key ideas, some of you may also prefer to identify ideas in a more creative manner (drawing, poetry). Please feel free to express yourself in a way that is natural to you.