
Part X: Paul's Second Letter to the Church at Thessalonica *(2 Thessalonians)*

Application Guide: 2 Thessalonians 1

1. Warm-up (5-10 min)

Choose one:

- a. Has anyone ever protected you from being hurt by a bully? What happened?

- b. What is the best compliment you ever received? How did it make you feel?

- c. What is the most restful experience you've ever had? How often would you like to do something like that again?

2. Engaging the Chapter (15-20 min)

Paul always starts his letters by encouraging the people to whom he is writing. Here he tells the Thessalonians that he is proud of them. Why do you think this is important?

In one sentence Paul says that the Thessalonians' "faith is flourishing" and their "love for one another is growing" (vs. 3). Are these two things related to each other? Does faith build love, does love build faith, or do they help each other to grow?

What do you think Paul means when he says, “God will use this persecution to... make you worthy of His kingdom” (vs. 5)? Do you think it is the amount of persecution endured that makes a person “worthy,” or the fact that a person loves Jesus so much that they would be willing to suffer anything for Him that makes them “worthy?” Do you think that God allows persecution in our lives to make us realize how much we need Him? Do you think there is another answer to this interesting statement?

How do you feel about the fact that God, in His justice, will “pay back” (vs. 6) those who have persecuted His people and bring flaming fire and judgment down on those persecutors, punishing them with eternal destruction? Do you think this is harsh and mean? Do you think God should be more patient with people, or is there a point when enough is enough?

Is telling people about the final destruction of the wicked a good way to motivate them to love Jesus more, or is there a better way? Does Paul start his letters to people by telling them they will be punished for what they have done wrong, or does he tell them how much he loves them, listing what they have done well?

3. Applying the Chapter to Your Life (5-10 min)

- a. Think through your life over the past few months and remind yourself of every good thing you have done. See if you can detect a connection to your actions and how your relationship with Jesus was going. Do you think you tend to be a better person when you’ve been having positive experiences with God? Why/why not?
- b. How do you tend to be more motivated to spend time with Jesus—by positive encouragement, striving to let Him fill your life with love and peace, or by the fear of end-time events and the possibility that the end may be coming soon? How do you think you can best find a healthy balance of these things in your life?

4. Prayer Time (3-5 min)

- a. Earnestly pray for Jesus to become very real to you and to help you see the connection between your time spent with Him and how you handle everyday life. Pray for Him to show you the rewards of life with Him and the peace it can bring in the midst of hard times.
- b. Thank Jesus for loving you, dying for you and being the one that makes you “worthy.” Ask Him to remind you daily that you are saved by His grace—not by your own works. Ask Him to pour out His love on you and draw you close to Him.