

Pure Doctrine for Holy Living

*A Study of the Epistle of James
and Paul's Epistles
to Galatia and Thessalonica*



Trinity Bible Church
Sunday School
Winter/Spring 2019

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*A Study of the Epistle of James
and Paul's Epistles
to Galatia and Thessalonica*

*But we should always give thanks to God,
for you, brethren beloved by the Lord,
because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation
through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.
2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NASB)*

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Introduction: Pure Doctrine for Holy Living

A new day dawned on the morning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It was a day of unsurpassed glory as the Son of God had conquered sin and death by His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead three days later. God was satisfied. The blood of the everlasting covenant had finally secured the long promised blessing – eternal peace with God for all who had or ever would put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Although the details of the incarnation of the Son of God and His redemptive work on the cross were poorly understood in the Old Testament, the reality of this great transaction was about to transform the lives and mission of the people of God in ways that no one could have predicted. The means and blessings of salvation would remain the same. From Adam's first sin to the present, eternal salvation has come to those who "believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6 NKJV). "The just shall live by faith" (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38 NKJV) had been and would continue to be unchanged as the central truth of the message of salvation. However, the manner by which God would govern His people would be completely different.

In the first 2000 years of world history, as recorded in Genesis 1 through 11, the manner in which God managed His people is not clear. Beginning in Genesis 12, the promise made to Abraham was foremost in the minds of believers with a focus upon living in the Promised Land in hope of the fulfillment of the promise. However, even in that era, we have little specific revelation about the details of the daily life of faith in the individual believer (Genesis 26:5). Before the last patriarch died, his descendants had gone to Egypt to escape the great famine in the Promised Land. It was there that the family grew and became a nation, albeit in slavery to the Egyptians. At the appointed time (Genesis 15:13-14), the LORD sent Moses to lead them back into the Promised Land. As they began their journey back into Canaan, at the base of Mount Sinai, the LORD gave them the Law of Moses. This very extensive and detailed set of commandments, statutes, and laws became the manner in which the LORD would govern His people.

In the days that followed the resurrection of Christ, it became apparent that the followers of Christ were entering a new age. It was an age that no one had seen coming. In fact, Paul tells us that it was a "mystery which for ages has been hidden in God" but now was about to be revealed through the apostles (Ephesians 3:8-10). The new age would be known as the New Covenant age, or the age of the Holy Spirit, or the age of the Church. The old order under the Law of Moses would be terminated as the manner in which the LORD would govern His people. Under this new order, the community of all believers would be known as the Church. Paul further wrote that the Church is the body of Christ who is its head (Ephesians 1:15-23). The distinctive of this age is the ever increasing manifestation of the life of Christ in each believer. It is brought about by the increased activity of the Holy Spirit in each believer. It is His work in the believer, using the Word of God, that results in the fruit of the Spirit and the obedience of faith (Romans 16:26). It was this powerful work of the Holy Spirit that would lead the small group of believers to initiate the spread of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Since this New Covenant age was a "mystery" to the believers, new revelation was necessary. Therefore, in the years following the ascension of Christ, the Holy Spirit revealed through the Apostles the manner of life in this New Covenant age. It was a life without the Law of Moses which had emphasized human obligation with the threat of penalty and the promise of reward. The emphasis would now be upon the power of God through the Holy Spirit to produce the required holiness of life.

For our study this session, we will study the four earliest writings by the Apostles: the Epistle of James, Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, and his two Epistles to the Thessalonians. These four epistles provide the first written teaching about the life of the people of God in the New Covenant Age. Not surprisingly, the relationship between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant would need clarification. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, showed how the work of salvation began in each believer by the Holy Spirit apart from the Law and will continue without the Law of Moses throughout the life of the believer. James addressed the concern that the new emphasis upon the life of the Spirit without the works of the Law would encourage careless living. He taught that true faith, of necessity, is manifest by works. In his epistles to the Thessalonian church, Paul addressed concerns that they had about the return of Christ. While these are the main emphases in these four epistles, all four epistles provided new instruction about the life of faith by the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant Age. It is our hope that a fresh look at these early New Testament writings will give us new understanding of our great salvation in this New Covenant Age, and be used by the Holy Spirit to renew our zeal for our Savior, and increase in each one of us the manifestation of the life of Christ in deed and word.

Schedule

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|-------------------|--|
| January 6, 2019 | Lesson 1: Enduring Trials James 1:1-18 |
| January 13, 2019 | Lesson 2: Doers of the Word James 1:19-2:13 |
| January 20, 2019 | Lesson 3: Faith Without Works is Dead! James 2:14-26 |
| January 27, 2019 | Lesson 4: Wisdom from Above James 3:1-18 |
| February 3, 2019 | Lesson 5: Draw Near to God! James 4:1-17 |
| February 10, 2019 | Lesson 6: The Coming of the Lord is at Hand James 5:1-20 |
| February 17, 2019 | Lesson 7: No Other Gospel Galatians 1:1-17 |
| February 24, 2019 | Lesson 8: The Truth of the Gospel Galatians 1:18-2:10 |
| March 3, 2019 | Lesson 9: Crucified with Christ Galatians 2:11-21 |
| March 10, 2019 | Lesson 10: The Just Shall Live by Faith Galatians 3:1-18 |
| March 17, 2019 | Lesson 11: Sons of God by Faith in Christ Jesus Galatians 3:19-4:7 |
| March 24, 2019 | Lesson 12: The Children of Promise Galatians 4:8-31 |
| March 31, 2019 | Lesson 13: Walk in the Spirit! Galatians 5:1-26 |
| April 7, 2019 | Lesson 14: Glory in the Cross Galatians 6:1-18 |
| April 14, 2019 | Lesson 15: The Power of the Gospel 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 |
| April 21, 2019 | Lesson 16: The Joy of Ministry 1 Thessalonians 2:1-3:13 |
| April 28, 2019 | Lesson 17: The Will of God 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18 |
| May 5, 2019 | Lesson 18: Sons of the Day 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28 |
| May 12, 2019 | Lesson 19: Worthy of the Kingdom of God 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12 |
| May 19, 2019 | Lesson 20: The Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 |
| May 26, 2019 | Lesson 21: Confidence in the Lord 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18 |

Scripture Memory Texts

James 1:12

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation:
for when he is tried,
he shall receive the crown of life,
which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

James 1:22

But be ye doers of the word,
and not hearers only,
deceiving your own selves.

James 2:26

For as the body without the spirit is dead,
so faith without works is dead also.

James 3:17

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure,
then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated,
full of mercy and good fruits,
without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

James 4:8

Draw nigh to God,
and he will draw nigh to you.
Cleanse your hands, ye sinners;
and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;
yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:
and the life which I now live in the flesh
I live by the faith of the Son of God,
who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Scripture Memory Texts (continued)

Galatians 5:16

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit,
and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Galatians 6:14

But God forbid that I should glory,
save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by whom the world is crucified unto me,
and I unto the world.

1 Thessalonians 5:15-18

15. See that none render evil for evil unto any man;
but ever follow that which is good,
both among yourselves, and to all men.

16. Rejoice evermore.

17. Pray without ceasing.

18. In every thing give thanks:
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus
concerning you.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

13. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you,
brethren beloved of the Lord,
because God hath from the beginning
chosen you to salvation
through sanctification of the Spirit
and belief of the truth:

14. Whereunto he called you by our gospel,
to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Moment by Moment

Daniel W. Whittle, 1840-1901

May Whittle Moody, b. 1870

1. Dy - ing with Je - sus, by death reck-oned mine; Liv - ing with Je - sus, a new life di - vine;
2. Nev - er a tri - al that he is not there, Nev - er a bur - den that he doth not bear,
3. Nev - er a weak-ness that he doth not feel, Nev - er a sick-ness that he can-not heal;

Look - ing to Je - sus till glo - ry doth shine, Mo - ment by mo - ment, O Lord, I am thine.
Nev - er a sor - row that he doth not share, Mo - ment by mo - ment, I'm un - der his care;
Mo - ment by mo - ment, in woe or in weal, Je - sus, my Sav - iour, a - bides with me still.

REFRAIN

Mo - ment by mo - ment I'm kept in his love; Mo - ment by mo - ment I've life from a - bove;

Look - ing to Je - sus till glo - ry doth shine; Mo - ment by mo - ment, O Lord, I am thine. A - men.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

An Outline

- I. **GREETINGS** (James 1:1)

- II. **BE HAPPY – IN OUR TRIALS** (James 1:2-18)
 - A. They mature us (1:2-4).
 - B. They teach us to pray in faith (1:5-8).
 - C. They make us realize our human frailty (1:9-11).
 - D. They cause us to live for eternal rewards (1:12).
 - E. They show us how prone we are to sin (1:13-15).
 - F. They show us that our blessings come from our heavenly Father (1:16-18).

- III. **BE HOLY** (James 1:19-3:12)
 - A. In departing from sin through obedience to the Word (1:19-27).
 - B. In dealing with people—the rich and the poor (2:1-13).
 - C. In showing our faith by our works (2:14-26).
 - D. In the use of the tongue (3:1-12).

- IV. **BE HUMBLE** (James 3:13-5:6)
 - A. In seeking wisdom from God (3:13-18).
 - B. Before God (4:1-10).
 - C. In our relationships with others (4:11, 12).
 - D. In making our plans and living our lives (4:13-17).
 - E. A warning to those who are rich (5:1-6).

- V. **BE HOPEFUL** (James 5:7-20)
 - A. About the Lord's return (5:7-10).
 - B. By persevering under our trials (5:11, 12).
 - C. About prayer being answered (5:13-18).
 - D. About rescuing others who have erred from the truth (5:19, 20).

Lesson 1: Enduring Trials

James 1:1-18

Memory: James 1:12

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: The epistle of James is one of the earliest New Testament books and was written to Christian Jews scattered throughout the Roman Empire. It begins with an encouragement to endure the various trials that had and would come upon them. James exhorts the believers to rejoice in these trials as they accomplish a perfecting work in their lives.

1. Why did James tell the brethren to rejoice when they fall into trials?
2. What did James tell those who lack wisdom?
3. What warning is given to those who doubt?
4. Why must the rich man glory when he is made low?
5. What encouragement is given for us to endure temptations?
6. Why must we avoid blaming God for our temptations?
7. What process occurs when we give in to temptation?
8. What did James say about gifts?
9. What evidence do we have of the Father's goodness toward us?

Application: What should we do when we find ourselves in times of trial?

Lesson 2: Doers of the Word James 1:19-2:13

Memory: James 1:22 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: James warns his listeners against hearing God's Word but not putting it into practice. He urges them not to be deceived by knowledge of the truth alone or by a "religion" that is not concerned with a life that matches what it believes and affirms. Being a doer of the Word involves a great responsibility toward mankind, including avoiding partiality and focusing on the "royal law" of loving our neighbors.

1. In what way should we be quick, and in what ways should we be slow?
2. What did James say about hearing and doing the Word of God?
3. How did James describe useless religion and pure religion?
4. How did James illustrate showing partiality?
5. What did James teach about poor people?
6. What did James teach about the rich?
7. What is the royal law?
8. Why are all men guilty under the Law?
9. What did James say about judgment?

Application: What behavior shows that we are truly hearing the Word of God?

Lesson 3: Faith Without Works is Dead! James 2:14-26

Memory: James 2:26 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: James follows his exhortation to be a doer of the Word by raising a compelling question – Can faith apart from works save a person? He then states that faith alone is dead. Saving faith must be a faith that works – a faith perfected and expressed by a transformed life. James supports his statements with two Old Testament examples – the faith-demonstrating lives of Abraham and Rahab.

1. What question did James raise about salvation?
2. What did James say about a brother or sister in need of clothing or food?
3. What is the relationship between faith and works?
4. How do the demons illustrate the lesson about faith and works?
5. Why did James say that Abraham was justified by his works?
6. What is the testimony of Scripture about Abraham?
7. What did James conclude about justification?
8. How did Rahab illustrate the relationship between faith and works?
9. How did James use human life to illustrate his point?

Application: Are we saved by faith or are we saved by works?

Lesson 4: Wisdom from Above

James 3:1-18

Memory: James 3:17 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: James uses strong language to describe the tongue – a fire, a world of iniquity, an unruly evil, and full of deadly poison. It is by the tongue that true faith is proven. Its fruit is produced by a heart either led by "wisdom" from the earth or wisdom from above.

1. Why did James warn against becoming a teacher of the Word?
2. What did James say about bits and rudders?
3. How is our tongue like a fire?
4. How is our tongue not like a wild animal?
5. What did James say about the tongue that he thought ought not to be so?
6. What did James observe in the natural realm that he applied to what he observed about the tongue?
7. How do we show that we are wise and understanding?
8. What is earthly or demonic wisdom?
9. What is wisdom from above?

Application: Why is our tongue so important?

Lesson 5: Draw Near to God! James 4:1-17

Memory: James 4:8 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: In chapter 4, James warns his readers against worldliness. Instead, they were to draw near to God in submission and true humility. In doing so, they would be given the grace to resist the devil and to not fall prey to worldly living and thinking.

1. Where do wars and fightings come from?
2. Why do you ask and not receive?
3. What did James teach about friendship with the world?
4. What did James teach about pride and humility?
5. What should we do about the devil and what should we do about God?
6. What instructions did James give to sinners?
7. What did James say about speaking evil of a brother?
8. How should we make our plans for the future?
9. What is sin?

Application: How do we draw near to God?

Lesson 6: The Coming of the Lord is at Hand James 5:1-20

Memory: Galatians 2:20 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: Because the coming of the Lord is near, James warns the rich against trusting in their riches, exhorts the brethren to be patient, and encourages the afflicted to continue to endure. He concludes his epistle by discussing the prayer of faith and the responsibility to rescue those who have erred from the truth.

1. What did James tell the rich to do?
2. What did James tell the rich about their conduct?
3. What did James learn from the farmer?
4. Why should we not grumble against a brother?
5. What do we learn from the prophets and Job?
6. What important lesson did James teach about swearing?
7. What did James say to the sick and suffering?
8. What did James teach about prayer?
9. How should we treat a brother who wanders from the truth?

Application: Why is the coming of the Lord important to us today?

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

An Outline

In Galatians, Paul defended his apostleship in the first two chapters, he defended and declared the doctrine of justification in chapters 3 and 4, and he exhorted the believers as to their practical duties in chapters 5 and 6.

Therefore, we can outline the epistle as follows:

- I. **PERSONAL (Galatians 1, 2) – A defense of his apostleship**
- II. **DOCTRINAL (Galatians 3, 4) – A defense of the doctrine of justification by faith, and not of works**
- III. **PRACTICAL (Galatians 5, 6) – A description of the life of a Christian**

I. THE DEFENSE OF PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP (Galatians 1, 2)

Wherever Paul's apostleship was questioned, his teaching was also questioned. Therefore, Paul defended his apostleship to preserve his own integrity as well as the authority and faithfulness of his ministry.

- A. His title and his greeting (1:1-5)
- B. His affirmation of the importance of the Gospel (1:6-10)
- C. The unique way he had received the Gospel as a revelation from God, and how his life had been transformed (1:11-24)
- D. His acceptance by the other apostles (2:1-10)
- E. His rebuke of the Apostle Peter and his defense of the Gospel (2:11-21)

II. THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (Galatians 3, 4)

Here Paul was defending the doctrine of justification by faith against the teachers who had introduced the works of the Law as essential for salvation.

- A. The ministry of the Spirit in salvation by faith (3:1-5)
- B. The justification of Abraham (3:6-18)
- C. The purpose of the Law (3:19-4:7)
- D. Paul's rebuke of the churches because:
 - 1. They had turned back to the Law, and it had affected their relationship with him (4:8-18).
 - 2. They were ignorant of the true nature of the Law (4:19-31).

III. THE DUTIES OF BELIEVERS UNDER GRACE (Galatians 5, 6)

When doctrine is corrupted, the lives of believers are corrupted too. Therefore, Paul gave some practical exhortations which must have been especially needed in the Galatian churches.

- A. The believer's liberty in Christ (5:1-15)
- B. The believer's responsibility to walk in the Spirit (5:16-26)
- C. Various practical exhortations (6:1-10)
- D. Paul's final appeal and conclusion (6:11-18)

Lesson 7: No Other Gospel Galatians 1:1-17

Memory: Galatians 5:16 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: The churches of Galatia had openly accepted the heretical teaching that salvation for both the Jews and Gentiles includes submission to the Mosaic Law. Because his teaching was being questioned, Paul defended his apostleship and used his own conversion as an example of justification by grace through faith alone. It is not of man, nor does it include the works of the Law.

1. How did Paul describe his apostleship?
2. Why did Paul ascribe glory to God forever?
3. What amazed Paul about the Galatians?
4. What curse did Paul pronounce?
5. What difference did it make to Paul that he was a servant of Christ?
6. What did Paul say about the Gospel which he preached?
7. How did Paul describe his former conduct?
8. What changed Paul's course?
9. What did Paul do after his call to preach the Gospel?

Application: How can we recognize "another Gospel"?

Lesson 8: The Truth of the Gospel Galatians 1:18-2:10

Memory: Galatians 6:14 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: Before joining the apostles in Jerusalem, Paul spent three years learning "by revelation" about the faith which "once he destroyed." Observing his transformed life, the believers glorified God and the apostles accepted him as a preacher of the truth of the gospel. Though false brethren sought to pervert the gospel by requiring circumcision as a means of grace, it was evident that the same grace that had called the "pillars" (James, Peter, and John) to ministry among the circumcised had been given also to Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to the uncircumcised.

1. What happened on Paul's first visit to Jerusalem as a Christian?
2. What happened when Paul went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia?
3. Why did Paul go to Jerusalem a second time?
4. What issue came up about Titus while Paul was in Jerusalem?
5. Why did Paul resist the false brethren?
6. What did Paul say about those who seemed to be important in Jerusalem?
7. How did Paul's ministry compare with Peter's ministry?
8. Who were the pillars, and what decision did they make about the ministry?
9. What special instructions were given to Paul and Barnabas?

Application: What is the liberty which we have in Christ Jesus?

Lesson 9: Crucified with Christ Galatians 2:11-21

Memory: 1 Thessalonians 5:15 and review

Hymn: “Moment by Moment”

SUMMARY: Hearing that Peter himself struggled with the question of law-keeping, Paul confronted Peter and reminded the believers that justification by faith in Christ leaves no room for the works of the Law. He warned them of the consequences of forsaking this doctrine, namely that Christ would be perceived as a minister of sin, and we would make ourselves transgressors. Christ's death was vain if it ever becomes possible that righteousness can be obtained by law-keeping.

1. What did Peter do in Antioch that Paul was concerned about?

2. What effect did Peter's actions have upon others?

3. What did Paul see that the problem was?

4. What did Paul say to Peter before the church in Jerusalem?

5. What did Paul say the Christian Jews had learned about justification?

6. How is it possible for Christ to be perceived as a minister of sin?

7. How would Paul make himself a transgressor?

8. What did Christ's death and life mean to Paul?

9. How did this issue affect the grace of God?

Application: What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?

Lesson 10: The Just Shall Live By Faith Galatians 3:1-18

Memory: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: Paul rebukes the Galatian believers for being so easily swayed into thinking that justification includes the works of the Law. He reminded them of their own justification, received from the Spirit by faith alone. Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. The sons of Abraham, including believing Gentiles, are counted righteous in the same way, for "the just shall live by faith." The Law puts us under a curse. Christ redeems us from that curse.

1. Why did Paul consider the Galatians to be foolish?

2. What can be learned from the life of Abraham?

3. Who are the sons of Abraham?

4. What is the significance of God's promise of blessing through Abraham?

5. What is the result of being under the Law?

6. Why is it impossible to be justified by the Law?

7. How does the blessing of Abraham come upon the Gentiles?

8. What principle did Paul state about covenants?

9. Why is it not possible for the inheritance to come by the Law?

Application: What is the difference between living by faith and living by the Law?

Lesson 11: Sons of God by Faith in Christ Jesus Galatians 3:19-4:7

Memory: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: Paul reminds the believers of the Law's bondage. The Law came because of transgression and after the promise of Christ was given. It was a schoolmaster, something both children who were slaves and children who were heirs were guided by until adulthood. Through faith in Christ, we are no longer in need of this schoolmaster. We become full-grown sons, no longer slaves to the bondage of the Law.

1. What purpose did the Law serve?
2. What was the effect of the Law?
3. How is the Law a tutor (schoolmaster)?
4. Who is a son of God?
5. What is the difference between a son of God and an heir of Abraham?
6. Why is an heir in childhood no different from a servant?
7. How does this lesson on heirs apply to the place of the Law?
8. What did God do "in the fulness of the time"?
9. What does it mean to receive adoption as sons?

Application: What did Paul mean when he said "we are no longer under a schoolmaster (or tutor)?"

Lesson 12: The Children of Promise Galatians 4:8-31

Memory: 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: The Galatian churches had turned back to following the tradition of their fathers. Paul rebukes them again, and reminds them of what the law symbolized – bondage to sin. He presents an allegory of two sons – the son of bondage and the son of the free, representing two covenants. In Christ, all who believe are sons of promise.

1. What did Paul think about their observation of days and months and times (seasons) and years?
2. How had Paul appeared to the Galatians at the first and how did they receive him?
3. Why had the Galatians changed their attitude toward Paul?
4. What was Paul's opinion about the Galatians?
5. How are the two sons of Abraham described?
6. What did the two sons of Abraham symbolize?
7. Where do we fit into this picture?
8. What other similarity is there between the sons of Abraham and the situation in the Galatian churches?
9. What did Scripture teach about the son of the bondwoman?

Application: What does it mean that we are the children of promise and not of the bondwoman?

Lesson 13: Walk in the Spirit! Galatians 5:1-26

Memory: 2 Thessalonians 2:14 and review

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: Paul exhorts the Galatians to stand fast in the liberty they had in Christ. However, he warns them not to let this freedom from the law cause them to fall into fleshly living. Paul exhorts the struggling believers to walk in the Spirit, where true freedom from law and sin is found.

1. What instructions did Paul give to those who are free in Christ?

2. What are the consequences of circumcision?

3. What is the alternative to justification by the Law?

4. Why did Paul suffer persecution?

5. How should the brethren exercise their liberty in Christ?

6. What two opposing forces are at work in a believer?

7. What are the works of the flesh, and what happens to those who practice them?

8. What is the fruit of the Spirit?

9. How are we able to walk in the Spirit?

Application: What is Christian liberty?

Lesson 14: Glory in the Cross Galatians 6:1-18

Memory: Review all verses

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: After giving various final exhortations, Paul concludes his epistle with a final appeal regarding the issue of circumcision. Circumcision and the works of the law are to no avail. Their end is only personal gain and glory. Paul's desire was for boasting in the cross of Christ alone. In Christ alone is justification and freedom from the Law.

1. How should we care for one another?
2. How should we care for ourselves?
3. How should we treat our teachers?
4. What are the principles of sowing and reaping?
5. How did Paul apply these principles of sowing and reaping?
6. Why were some trying to compel the Galatians to observe circumcision?
7. What did Paul especially want to avoid?
8. Why are neither circumcision nor uncircumcision important in Christ?
9. Who will get mercy and peace?

Application: What does it mean to glory in the cross?

PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

An Outline

I. PAUL'S GREETING (1 Thessalonians 1:1)

Here Paul identified himself as the author of this epistle, told who his companions were, mentioned those for whom this epistle was written, and his prayer for them.

II. HISTORICAL AND PERSONAL (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3:13)

A. A thankful review of God's work in Thessalonica (1:2-10)

B. A reminder of the nature of Paul's ministry among them—again marked with Paul's thanksgiving to God in 2:13 (2:11-16)

Paul's integrity was under attack, and so he defended himself in this section.

C. Paul's great concern for the church in Thessalonica (2:17-3:10)

This also was a part of Paul's defense against the charges made by his enemies, that he really did not care for the people. There evidently was an attempt on the part of Paul's enemies to get the people to believe that Paul was doing what he was doing for his own personal gain, and not to benefit the people of Thessalonica in any way.

D. Paul's prayer for himself and for the church (3:11-13)

III. PRACTICAL AND DOCTRINAL (1 Thessalonians 4:1-5:24)

A. The practical exhortations concerning their walk (4:1-12)

Emphasis is upon a holy life.

B. The doctrine: the coming of the Lord (4:13-5:5)

Every chapter in this epistle closes with a reference to the coming of the Lord (cf. 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19, 20; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:24). In addition we must include 1 Thess. 5:1-5.

C. The practical exhortations resumed and completed (5:6-24)

IV. CONCLUSION (1 Thessalonians 5:25-28)

Three of these four verses contain additional practical exhortations, but are given by way of conclusion. Paul began this epistle with a prayer for grace, and he concluded on the same note.

Lesson 15: The Power of the Gospel

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Memory: Review all verses

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: While on his second missionary journey, Paul had spent only a short time in Thessalonica, in which time the Holy Spirit had powerfully worked, causing many in this city to receive the Word by faith. 1 Thessalonians is written in response to a report sent to Paul by Timothy concerning the condition of this church of new converts. In this first chapter, Paul expresses his thanks to God upon hearing that the believers were continuing in faith, love, and hope of the Lord's return.

1. Who is writing this epistle and to whom are they writing?

2. Why did Paul give thanks to God for the Thessalonian church?

3. How did Paul express confidence in the salvation of the Thessalonian brethren?

4. In what way did the Gospel come to this church?

5. What happened when the Thessalonians heard the Gospel?

6. What suggestion is there that the reception of the Gospel was not easy for the Thessalonians?

7. What effect did the salvation of the Thessalonians have upon the spread of the Gospel?

8. What change occurred in the Thessalonians as a result of the Gospel?

9. What was the hope of the Thessalonian church?

Application: What is the evidence that the Gospel has come with power?

Lesson 16: The Joy of Ministry

1 Thessalonians 2:1-3:13

Memory: Review all verses

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: As Paul departed from Thessalonica and continued on his second missionary journey, his integrity and the motive of his ministry in Thessalonica were severely criticized by his enemies. Paul reminds the believers of the nature of his ministry among them and assures them that they were his "crown of rejoicing." He again expresses his thanks to God for the report he had received from Timothy of their faith, love, and hope.

1. What experience did Paul have before coming to Thessalonica, and how did it affect his ministry?
2. How did Paul describe his manner of ministry?
3. What did Paul want the Thessalonian brethren to remember?
4. For what did Paul offer unceasing thanks to God?
5. How had the Jews sinned?
6. Why did Paul not visit the Thessalonians, and how did he describe his feeling toward them?
7. What was Paul's concern about the Thessalonian church?
8. What report did Paul get from Timothy, and how did Paul respond to this report?
9. What prayer requests did Paul make concerning himself and concerning the Thessalonians?

Application: How should we pray for one another?

Lesson 17: The Will of God

1 Thessalonians 4:1-18

Memory: Review all verses

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: Paul exhorts the Thessalonian believers to continue living the holy life they had been called to live. This includes abstaining from fornication, continuing to grow in brotherly love, and walking honestly toward those outside of the church. Paul then clarifies a misunderstanding regarding those who die in the Lord before His return. He describes the manner of Christ's coming and tells them to comfort one another with this hope.

1. What did Paul urge and exhort the Thessalonian believers to do?

2. What is the will of God?

3. What did Paul say about the call of God?

4. What did Paul write about brotherly love?

5. What did Paul teach about work?

6. Why was Paul concerned about their ignorance concerning the death of a believer?

7. What hope does the death and resurrection of Christ guarantee?

8. How did Paul describe the coming of the Lord?

9. How did Paul tell the Thessalonians to use the doctrine of the coming of the Lord?

Application: What characteristics should be seen in the life of a believer?

Lesson 18: Sons of the Day

1 Thessalonians 5:1-28

Memory: Review all verses

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: Paul reminds the Thessalonian believers that the Day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night. For this reason, they were to watch, be sober-minded, and put on faith, love, and hope as spiritual armor against the domain of darkness from which they had been delivered. He concludes his epistle with a prayer that the faithful God who had called them to holy behavior would sanctify them completely, keeping them blameless until the coming of Christ.

1. What did Paul teach about the Day of the Lord?

2. What does it mean to be a son of light, or a son of the day?

3. What is God's appointment for us?

4. What is our responsibility toward those who are over us in the Lord?

5. What is our responsibility to one another?

6. What is our responsibility to God?

7. What is our responsibility to the Spirit and the Word?

8. What final prayer request did Paul make in this epistle?

9. What final instructions did Paul give the Thessalonians?

Application: Why is the teaching about the Day of the Lord important to us?

PAUL'S SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

An Outline

The church at Thessalonica was going through very difficult times. It seems that Paul's primary purpose in writing this epistle was to encourage them. In Chapter 1, he encouraged them by reminding them that God would bring the evildoers to judgment at His coming. In Chapter 2, he encouraged them that they were not in "the Day of the Lord" (the preferred reading of verse 2). In Chapter 3, he encouraged them to keep the work pure by the exercise of church discipline.

I. PERSECUTIONS AND TRIBULATIONS (2 Thessalonians 1:1-12)

- A. Greetings and Invocation (1:1, 2)
- B. Thanksgiving (1:3-5)
- C. God will judge those who persecute His people (1:6-10)
- D. Intercession (1:11, 12)

II. THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17)

- A. Encouragement through Instruction (2:1-12)
- B. Thanksgiving (2:13, 14)
- C. Exhortation (2:15)
- D. Intercession (2:16, 17)

III. CHURCH DISCIPLINE (2 Thessalonians 3:1-18)

- A. Paul's Request for Prayer (3:1, 2)
- B. Encouragement and Prayer (3:3-5)
- C. Exhortation for Church Discipline (3:6-15)
- D. Benediction and Conclusion (3:16-18)

Lesson 19: Worthy of the Kingdom of God 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

Memory: Review all verses

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: The patience and hope of the Thessalonian believers while under severe persecution was something Paul spoke of often to encourage the various churches he met with on his missionary journeys. In this second epistle, Paul writes to encourage these troubled believers. He assured them that their patience in suffering was an indication that God's righteous judgment would fall on their persecutors, but they would be a channel by which Christ would be glorified at His coming.

1. How do Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy greet the church at Thessalonica?

2. Why was Paul thankful to God?

3. What did Paul boast about?

4. What is evidence of God's righteous judgment?

5. What did Paul say about those who troubled the Thessalonian believers?

6. What could those who are troubled expect from God?

7. What will happen to those who do not know God or obey His Gospel?

8. How is "that Day" described for those who believed Paul's testimony?

9. What prayer requests did Paul make for the Thessalonian church?

Application: Why is it important to think about the coming of the Lord?

Lesson 20: The Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

Memory: Review all verses

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: In chapter 2, Paul presents the sole purpose for writing this epistle – to correct a misunderstanding about the end times. Paul urges them not to be deceived into thinking that the Day of the Lord was present or had already occurred. This "Day" will not occur until after "our gathering together unto Him" and a Lawless One is allowed to deceive many. The believers were not to be shaken by error regarding the Day of the Lord. Instead, Paul urges them to stand fast in the Truth.

1. Why did Paul write them about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?
2. What will happen before that Day comes?
3. What is necessary before the Lawless (Wicked) One is revealed?
4. What will happen to this Lawless One?
5. How will the Lawless One appear?
6. Who will believe this Lawless One, and why will they be deceived by him?
7. Why did Paul offer thanksgiving to God?
8. What did Paul call for the Thessalonians to do?
9. How did Paul pray for the Thessalonians?

Application: How do we become Christians?

Lesson 21: Confidence in the Lord

2 Thessalonians 3:1-18

Memory: Review all verses

Hymn: "Moment by Moment"

SUMMARY: Paul gives the Thessalonian believers instructions to follow as a church and as individuals. Paul asks for prayer, tells them how to deal with disorderly conduct, and urges them to avoid being busybodies by working for their own wages. He closes his epistle with an encouragement not to be weary in well-doing and with a prayer for God's peace and grace to be with them.

1. What prayer request did Paul give the Thessalonian church?

2. Why do we need not fear the Evil One?

3. Why was Paul confident about the Thessalonians?

4. What is disorderly conduct and how should believers deal with it?

5. How did Paul conduct himself when he was with the Thessalonians?

6. What did Paul say about those who would not work?

7. What did Paul say about busybodies?

8. What final words of instruction did Paul give to the Thessalonian church?

9. What blessings did Paul invoke in his benediction?

Application: What are some things that we can do to uphold the ministry of the Word?