

# WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND HOPE

## A Study of Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians and the Ephesians

**MEDITATE:** 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18.

Quiet your heart before the Lord. This does not necessarily mean that your environment needs to be silent, although this can be helpful. Set aside a time free from distractions to focus on the passage as you read and meditate on it.

These instructions may help you develop a method for meditating on our passage each week. You may want to incorporate all or some of these ideas, whatever is helpful.

- ❖ Read the passage, slowly and prayerfully asking the Lord to speak to you from his word. Take several minutes to mull over the passage.
- ❖ Read the passage aloud and again take several minutes to give careful thought to it.
- ❖ Listen to the passage being read aloud. You may want to have someone else read it to you, or use a Bible program such as [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) or YouVersion, a free Bible app.
- ❖ Read the passage in other translations.

Finally, consider the following questions:

What words or phrases stand out to me? Why?

## MEDITATE

“Remember that it is not hasty reading but serious meditation on holy and heavenly truths, that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the mere touching of the flower by the bee that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time on the flower that draws out the sweet. It is not he that reads most but he that meditates most that will prove to be the choicest, sweetest, wisest and strongest Christian.”

— Thomas Brooks, 17<sup>th</sup> century

What questions does the passage raise that I want to know more about?

**DIG IN:** Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18.

1. In this passage Paul takes the matter of “idleness” seriously.
  - a. Why is this?
  - b. By whose authority does he speak? (vv. 6, 12)
2. Paul commands the Thessalonians “to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and doesn’t live according to the teaching they had received” (v. 6). What was the teaching they had previously received? (1 Thess. 2:9, 12; 4:1; Note: teaching doesn’t always come in words.)



6. What is Paul's encouragement in verse 13? Personalize this verse by replacing the words "brothers and sisters" with your name and write it out. (For further encouragement read Eph. 6:7-8.)

Commentator Michael Holmes says there is "... a significant emphasis throughout the Thessalonian letters, that Christian behavior is fundamentally other-oriented rather than self-centered. This other-oriented approach contrasts sharply with the more self-centered perspective of the 'disorderly.'"<sup>3</sup>

7. Though Paul doesn't spell it out, what is his goal in admonishing the Thessalonians to "take special note" (v. 14) and "not associate" (v. 14) with those who do not obey his teaching? (v. 15; See also Gal. 6:1 and 2 Cor. 7:8-10.)

8. In the closing comments of his letter, Paul offers a blessing to his readers and reminds them of the peace, presence, and grace (undeserved favor) of the Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 16, 18). Why do you think this is significant for them (and for us)?

9. Three times Paul uses the name "Lord Jesus Christ," a title that shows his rule over us, his life lived among us, and his role as the fulfillment of God's promises throughout the ages. In this way, he connects the grace of God to the "other-oriented" life to which we are called. Prayerfully consider areas of your life where you can pivot to be more "other-oriented."

### **LORD JESUS CHRIST**

**Lord:** "a title of honor, expressive of respect and reverence."<sup>4</sup>

**Jesus:** name meaning "'Yahweh saves' (or 'Yahweh is salvation')."<sup>5</sup> (See also Mt. 1:21 – "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.")

**Christ:** title meaning "the Anointed one, Messiah."<sup>6</sup>

## PAUSE TO WORSHIP


*Re-read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18. Take time to interact with the Lord about the passage.*

*“Once we’ve meditated to focus, understand, and remember, we will normally find our hearts inclined to worship. So, we pause to lift our gaze to the excellencies of Christ, to bend our eyes off the world, to express thanksgiving and adoration when we pray. Meditation leads to delight when the Holy Spirit inclines our hearts to see and savor how glorious God is.”<sup>7</sup>*

- ❖ How do I respond to the beauty I see in God’s will, work, and ways in this passage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ In what ways do I see Jesus more clearly through this passage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Is there a song or hymn that comes to mind that helps express my response to the passage?

## REFLECT & PRAY

- ❖ How can I take what I’m learning from this passage and make it my own? Is there something specific to believe, do, not do, be grateful for, etc.?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ How does this passage help me see myself and others differently?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Pray the passage: Use the passage as a basis to talk to God about the things you are learning, seeing, and longing for as well as ways the passage speaks to your current life experiences.

\* Indicates passages for further study

<sup>1</sup> New American Standard Bible translation

<sup>2</sup> Holmes, Michael W., *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 279.

<sup>3</sup> Holmes, 280.

<sup>4</sup> “2962. kurios,” Thayer’s Greek Lexicon (THAYER’S GREEK LEXICON, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2006, 2011 by Biblesoft, Inc.) on Bible Hub, <https://biblehub.com/greek/2962.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> “2424. Iésous,” HELPS Word-studies (Copyright © 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc.) on Bible Hub, <https://biblehub.com/greek/2424.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> “5547. Christos,” Strong’s Concordance on Bible Hub, <https://biblehub.com/greek/5547.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/5-steps-to-meditating-on-your-bible/>