

New Testament Recovery Version
Study Guide

For Vital Groups

Series III- 1Thessalonians to Revelation

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

TO THE

THESSALONIANS

-PHILEMON

Week 1 1 Thes. 1:1-2 Thes. 3:18

I. Key Verses:

- 1 Thes. 1:3 Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;
- 1 Thes. 2:7 But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children.
- 1 Thes. 4:3 For this is will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication.
- 1 Thes. 5:8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and a helmet, the hope of salvation.
- 1 Thes. 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Thes. 1:10 When He comes to be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at in all those who have believed in that day.
- 2 Thes. 2:13 But we ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers beloved of the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,

II. Central Lane:

Please read the corresponding outline. (NT RcV p.940, 958)

III. The Light of the Truth:

THE TRIPARTITE MAN

—1 Thess. 5:23 and note 5, Heb. 4:12 and note 2, 3.

Further Reading: Life-Study of 1 Thessalonians, Msg. 23, 24.

IV. Life Supply:

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, we are tripartite beings; that is, we have three parts: spirit, soul, and body.

Whenever we Christians come together in a church meeting, we need to function. We need to pray, praise, or give a word of testimony. This is to exercise our spirit and not allow it to remain dormant or in a deadened condition.

Our psychological heart has three main arteries. These arteries, which are also the three parts of the soul, are the mind, the will, and the emotion. It is important to know how in a practical way to have these arteries unclogged. For the unclogging of the arteries of our physical heart, doctors may prescribe medication. But in many cases surgery is required to remove the blockage. The way to unclog the three main arteries of our psychological heart is to make a thorough confession to the Lord. From experience I have learned that we need to stay with the Lord for a period of time to confess our defects, failures, defeats, mistakes, wrongdoings, and sins.

If we take the time necessary to unclog the three main arteries of our psychological heart, we shall have the sense that our entire being has become living. Our mind, will, and emotion will all be in a very healthy condition. All the “dirt” in these “ditches” will then be dug away.

To preserve our body is actually very difficult. It is much easier to preserve our spirit and our soul than to preserve our body. The most difficult thing for us to do in this defiling, contaminating world is to preserve our body. We need to be careful not to look at anything, listen to anything, or touch anything that will defile our body.

God desires to sanctify us wholly and to preserve our spirit, soul, and body complete. However, we need to cooperate with Him. The way to cooperate is to rejoice, pray unceasingly, give thanks to Him in everything, not quench the Spirit, and not despise prophesying in the church meetings. If we cooperate in this way, our spirit will be preserved from deadness, our soul will be preserved from pollution in mind, will, and emotion, and our body will be preserved from the defilement of this age. Then in a practical way we shall have a holy life for the church life. Paul’s aim in writing 1 Thessalonians, a book for new believers, was that they would live such a sanctified and holy life for the church life. (*Life-Study of 1 Thessalonians, pp. 202, 205, 209, 211, 213-214*)

Week 2 1 Tim. 1:1- 6:21

I. Key Verses:

- 1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- 1 Tim. 1:5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith;
- 1 Tim. 2:4 Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.
- 1 Tim. 3:13 For those who have ministered well obtain for themselves a good standing and much boldness in faith, which is in Christ Jesus.
- 1 Tim. 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
- 1 Tim. 4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come.
- 1 Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

II. Central Lane:

Please read the corresponding outline.(NT RcV pp. 967)

III. The Light of the Truth:

THE ECONOMY OF GOD

—1 Tim. 1:4 and note 3, 4; Eph. 1:10 and note 2; Eph. 3:9.

Further Reading: Life-Study of 1 Timothy , Msg. 1; Life-Study of Ephesians, Msg. 28

IV. Life Supply:

God's dispensation is His household economy. According to the Bible, God does not first want to have a kingdom. Rather, He first wants a house, a family. Once He has a family, His family will spontaneously become His kingdom. If He is not able to secure a family, a household, a house, He will not be able to have a kingdom. Thus, God's dispensation is first a matter of His household economy, or family economy.

God's dispensation is His household administration to dispense Himself in Christ into His chosen people that He might have a house, a household, the church, the Body of Christ, to express Himself. (*Life-Study of 1 Timothy*, pp. 11-12)

According to ancient usage, *oikonomia* denoted a stewardship, a dispensation, or an administration. At the time of Paul, many rich families had stewards whose responsibility was to distribute food and other necessities to members of the household. Our Father has a great family, a divine household. Because our Father has such vast riches, there is the need in His household for many stewards to dispense these riches to His children. This dispensing is the stewardship. Hence, a stewardship is a dispensation. The word "dispensation" here does not denote an age or means by which God deals with people; it refers to God's dispensing of His riches into His chosen ones. This dispensation is the stewardship with the dispensing ministry of the ministers of God. This ministry of dispensing is also God's administration. Today God administers by dispensing Himself into us. This stewardship, this dispensation, this administration, is God's economy. In the New Testament economy of God there is the desperate need for the stewardship of grace.

Our concept of preaching the gospel needs to be uplifted. We should not be concerned merely with winning souls. Rather, we should preach the gospel to carry out God's economy by dispensing God into others. Go to school or to work for the purpose of carrying out your stewardship according to God's economy for His dispensation. We are not doing an ordinary work of gospel preaching. We are dispensing God into man. What a glorious ministry! What a wonderful stewardship! Praise the Lord that we all have such a stewardship! We have the privilege of dispensing the unsearchable riches of Christ into others. (*Life-Study of Ephesians*, pp. 241-242, 246)

Week 3 2 Tim. 1:1- Philemon 25

I. Key Verses:

- 2 Tim. 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
- 2 Tim. 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
- 2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
- 2 Tim. 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.
- Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching of the apostles, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.
- Titus 2:13 Awaiting the blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,
- Titus 3:5 Not out of works in righteousness which we did but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,
- Philem. 20 Yes, brother, may I have profit from you in the Lord; refresh my inward parts in Christ.

II. Central Lane:

Please read the corresponding outline. (NT ReV pp. 992, 1009, 1023)

III. The Light of the Truth:

THE SCRIPTURE

—2 Tim. 3:15-17 and 16 note 1, 2; 2 Pet. 1:21 and note 2

Further Reading: Life-Study of 2 Timothy, Msg. 6.

IV. Life Supply:

2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”... The expression “God-breathed” indicates that the Scripture, the Word of God, is the breath of God. God’s speaking is God’s breathing. Hence, His word is spirit (John 6:63), pneuma, or breath. Thus, the Scripture is the embodiment of God as the Spirit. The Spirit is therefore the very essence, the substance, of the Scripture, just as phosphorus is the essential substance in matches. We must “strike” the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit to kindle the divine fire.

As the embodiment of God the Spirit, the Scripture is also the embodiment of Christ. Christ is God’s living Word (Rev. 19:13), and the Scripture is God’s written word (Matt. 4:4).

We need to know the Bible not merely according to letters in black and white, but also according to the divine revelation and heavenly wisdom... As human beings we have a physical body outwardly, but inwardly we have a spirit and a soul. Our person is composed not mainly of the outward part, the body, but of the inward parts, the spirit and the soul. The principle is the same with the Bible. The Bible has not only a “body” of letters in black and white; it also has a spirit, because it is God-breathed.

We thank the Lord for showing us that in reading the Word we need to exercise our eyes, our mind, and our spirit. We may say that with the eyes we contact the body of the Word, that with our mind we contact the soul of the Word, and through the exercise of our spirit to pray the Word, we contact the spirit of the Word. Then we not only understand the meaning of a certain portion of Scripture; we also inhale the divine breath to receive the life supply.

In Colossians 3:16 Paul says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.” By praying, psalming, and singing the Word we shall fan our spirit into flame. Furthermore, when we pray, psalm, and sing the Word, we inhale the divine breath and receive more of the element of God. In this way God dispenses Himself into us and infuses us with His element. (*Life-Study of 2 Timothy*, pp. 51-54)