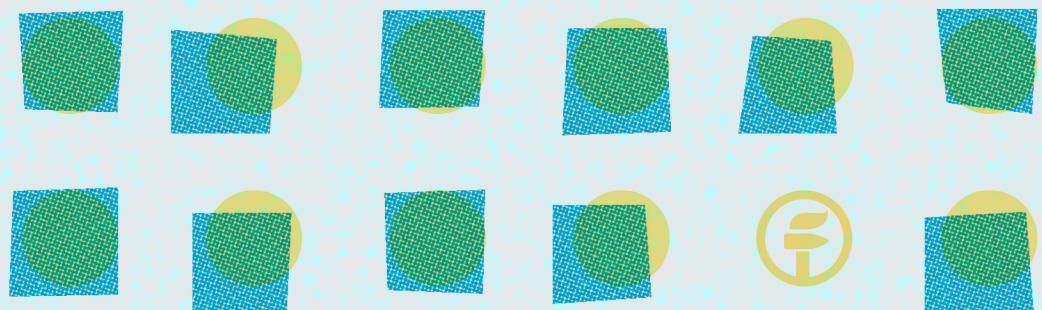


1 THESSALONIANS





INTRO



VIDEO

Book of 1 Thessalonians Summary: A Complete Animated Overview

Bible Project



AUTHORS

Paul, with the help of Silas and Timothy

CONTEXT

Paul, Silas, and Timothy have established the church in Thessalonica, but they have had to flee because of opposition. Timothy has traveled back to the church and gives Paul an honorable report, which prompts Paul to send this letter to the Thessalonians. Paul writes from Corinth during his second missionary journey.

AUDIENCE

Church in Thessalonica
(present day northern Greece)

TIME PERIOD

Written between AD 49–51

THEME

Continue in Holiness

1 THESSALONIANS

1 This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God give you grace and peace.

We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people. For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you. So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought

you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord. As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Greece—throughout both Macedonia and Achaia.

And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Macedonia and Achaia, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. We don't need to tell them about it, for they keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the living and true God. And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.

2 You yourselves know, dear brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not a failure. You know how badly we had been treated at Philippi

just before we came to you and how much we suffered there. Yet our God gave us the courage to declare his Good News to you boldly, in spite of great opposition. So you can see we were not preaching with any deceit or impure motives or trickery.

For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts. Never once did we try to win you with flattery, as you well know. And God is our witness that we were not pretending to be your friends just to get your money! As for human praise, we have never sought it from you or anyone else.

As apostles of Christ we certainly had a right to make some demands of you, but instead we were like children among you. Or we were like a mother feeding and caring for her own children. We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.

Don't you remember, dear brothers and sisters, how

hard we worked among you? Night and day we toiled to earn a living so that we would not be a burden to any of you as we preached God's Good News to you. You yourselves are our witnesses—and so is God—that we were devout and honest and faultless toward all of you believers. And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory.

Therefore, we never stop thanking God that when you received his message from us, you didn't think of our words as mere human ideas. You accepted what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it is. And this word continues to work in you who believe.

And then, dear brothers and sisters, you suffered persecution from your own countrymen. In this way, you imitated the believers in God's churches in Judea who, because of their belief in Christ Jesus, suffered from their own people, the Jews.

For some of the Jews killed the prophets, and some even killed the Lord Jesus. Now they have persecuted us, too. They fail to please God and work against all humanity as they try to keep us from preaching the Good News of salvation to the Gentiles. By doing this, they continue to pile up their sins. But the anger of God has caught up with them at last.

Dear brothers and sisters, after we were separated from you for a little while (though our hearts never left you), we tried very hard to come back because of our intense longing to see you again. We wanted very much to come to you, and I, Paul, tried again and again, but Satan prevented us. After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! Yes, you are our pride and joy.

3 Finally, when we could stand it no longer, we decided to stay alone in Athens, and we sent Timothy to visit you. He is our brother and God's co-worker in

proclaiming the Good News of Christ. We sent him to strengthen you, to encourage you in your faith, and to keep you from being shaken by the troubles you were going through. But you know that we are destined for such troubles. Even while we were with you, we warned you that troubles would soon come—and they did, as you well know. That is why, when I could bear it no longer, I sent Timothy to find out whether your faith was still strong. I was afraid that the tempter had gotten the best of you and that our work had been useless.

But now Timothy has just returned, bringing us good news about your faith and love. He reports that you always remember our visit with joy and that you want to see us as much as we want to see you. So we have been greatly encouraged in the midst of our troubles and suffering, dear brothers and sisters, because you have remained strong in your faith. It gives us new life to know that you are standing firm in the Lord.

How we thank God for you! Because of you we have great joy as we enter God's

presence. Night and day we pray earnestly for you, asking God to let us see you again to fill the gaps in your faith.

May God our Father and our Lord Jesus bring us to you very soon. And may the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen.

4 Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more. For you remember what we taught you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor—not in lustful

passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. Never harm or cheat a fellow believer in this matter by violating his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before. God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

But we don't need to write to you about the importance of loving each other, for God himself has taught you to love one another. Indeed, you already show your love for all the believers throughout Macedonia. Even so, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you to love them even more.

Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.

And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to

the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.

We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. So encourage each other with these words.

5 Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters, we don't really need to write you. For you know quite well that the day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a thief

in the night. When people are saying, "Everything is peaceful and secure," then disaster will fall on them as suddenly as a pregnant woman's labor pains begin. And there will be no escape.

But you aren't in the dark about these things, dear brothers and sisters, and you won't be surprised when the day of the Lord comes like a thief. For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don't belong to darkness and night. So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded. Night is the time when people sleep and drinkers get drunk. But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.

For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance. Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other.

Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone.

See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at prophecies, but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our

Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful.

Dear brothers and sisters, pray for us.

Greet all the brothers and sisters with a sacred kiss.

I command you in the name of the Lord to read this letter to all the brothers and sisters.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

WEEK 1



This week, you'll spend time first reading through, and then listening to, the book of Thessalonians from start to finish. Pay special attention to the differences between these two experiences. Is there anything new that stands out or anything you understand better when you read or listen? Throughout the week, take a few minutes each day to work through memorizing Scripture and praying. These practices are crucial in the life of a believer, and we want to practice writing God's Word on our hearts and being prayerful around his Word.

Scripture of the Week:

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

WEEK 1

DAY 1

- Read chapters 1–5.
- Write out the Scripture of the week 2–3 times. Work towards memorizing it.
 - » Write or type out the Scripture and put it where you will see it often, helping you commit it to memory (for example, put it on a sticky note in your car, write it on your bathroom mirror, make it the lock screen of your phone, etc.).

DAY 2

- Listen to chapters 1–5.
- Read the Scripture of the week out loud several times.
 - » See how much of the Scripture you can remember without looking.



Scan here
to listen.

DAY 3

- Guided Prayer | Response to 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Dear God,

Thank you for being a loving God who sees and knows your children. You have never left me, and you never will. God, I can be joyful (v. 16) because you have

God, you hear and listen to me. Thank you for hearing both my praises and sorrows. You are always with me. Help me to never stop praying (v. 17)! God, I pray for

Thank you for being a generous God! You have given me so much more than I could ask, think, or imagine. Even on difficult days, I still thank you! Help me to give thanks in all circumstances (v. 18). Right now, I thank you for

God, please prepare my heart for what you want to teach me through 1 Thessalonians. Help me look more like your Son, Jesus, every day. You are worthy to be praised, and I am so grateful to know you!

Amen.

Scripture of the Week:

Fill in the blanks:

Always be _____. Never stop _____. Be _____ in all _____, for this is God's will for you who _____.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

WEEK 2



This week, we'll spend time meditating on Scripture and learning about chapters 1 and 2 of 1 Thessalonians. As you study particular verses, write down what questions you have or what you might not understand. You can always ask a parent, leader, or staff member to help walk you through the weekly Scripture in order to gain a better understanding. We'll also memorize a new passage this week and spend time in intentional prayer around God's Word. You'll notice that the Scripture we'll memorize this week isn't from 1 Thessalonians; instead, it's a passage from Hebrews instructing believers to be strong in their faith and encourage one another. This is exactly what Paul, Silas, and Timothy are doing when they write the book of 1 Thessalonians. They are instructing the church to continue in the good works, hold fast to the truth that they believed, and live a life pleasing to God.

Scripture of the Week:

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

Hebrews 10:23–24

WEEK 2

DAY 1

- Go back and read chapter 1.

In chapter 1, we read about the drastic life change of the people in the church of the Thessalonians. It's clear that, while they once worshiped idols, they have changed their ways and are pursuing God. In their life change, others are coming to know God as well. Their lives have become a witness to the gospel, just as Paul, Silas, and Timothy had once been for them. This is a great encouragement for all believers. Once we experience this life change, our new job is to live in a way that brings others into God's family and to wait expectantly on Jesus' return.

- Discussion Questions:

» Have you heard the gospel and made the decision to follow Jesus?

» If not, what holds you back from making that decision?

» Who are the believers in your life who have led you to Jesus? Write down their names and then, if you'd like, take a minute to send them a text, thanking them for how they shared Jesus with you.

- Scripture of the Week:
 - » Write out the Scripture of the week 2–3 times. Work towards memorizing it.
 - » Write or type out the Scripture and put it where you will see it often, helping you commit it to memory (for example, put it on a sticky note in your car, write it on your bathroom mirror, make it the lock screen of your phone, etc.).

DAY 2

- Go back and read chapter 2.

Chapter 2 gives us insight into the experience that Paul, Silas, and Timothy have had on their missionary journey. Their time has been filled with persecution as they try to spread the gospel to the Gentile nations. It is not for the approval of man but for the

WEEK 2

sake of the gospel that they preach the Good News to the Thessalonians. Now, they live encouraged by the fact that this church has chosen to hear and obey the Word of God. By the end of the chapter, Paul turns his thoughts towards eternity. While being together again with the Thessalonians seems unlikely for him, he focuses on the joy and expectation that all believers will be reunited in Heaven. This is a great encouragement for us too. If you consider yourself a believer, you can look forward to the future hope of all believers being reunited for eternity.

- Discussion Questions:

- » The Thessalonians trusted the words Paul wrote to them. Who are the people you trust in your own life to disciple you?
- » In what ways have you faced suffering or opposition because of your faith?

- Scripture of the Week:

- » Try and write out the Scripture of the week using the first letter of each word below.

Scripture of the Week:

L_ u_ h_ t_ w_ w_ t_ t_ h_ w_ a_ , f_
G_ c_ b_ t_ t_ k_ h_ p_ . L_ u_ t_ o_ w_ t_
m_ o_ a_ t_ a_ o_ l_ a_ g_ w_ .

Hebrews 10:23–24

DAY 3

- Guided Prayer | Response to 1 Thessalonians 2

Father,

Thank you for being a gracious God. You are kind and compassionate to me even when I turn away from you and run to other things. You offer me hope for today and strength for tomorrow because of your unfailing love and promises. I'm thankful for the ways you

Thank you for giving your Word to your people. You show me who you are and who I am because of you. You have given me everything I need to live a godly life. You have shown me that, in your presence, there is fullness of joy. I don't have to live in my sin and shame anymore because you've taken it upon yourself. God, before you, my life was

And after you, my life has been _____.

God, I pray that my purpose would be to please you (v. 4) and that the motives of my heart would be pure. I confess that I haven't lived in ways that honor you and reflect your Son. I have gone my own way by _____.

But I am so grateful for your forgiveness and grace when I come back to you. God, I ask for courage and boldness to share your Good News with those around me. Help me to share not just the Good News but also my life with others so they can be blessed (v. 8). I pray that others would be reminded of your love by the ways I care for them.

God, as evil and injustice happen, help me remember that you will make all things right. I can rest in the fact that you will take care of the things that are out of my control. I pray that you would recenter my gaze on you and my life would be considered worthy to you (v. 12).

Amen.

WEEK 2

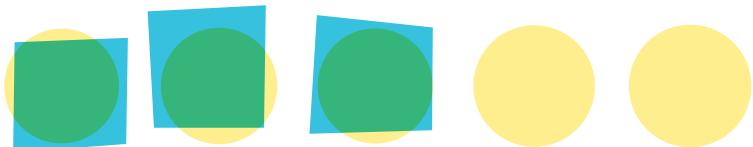
Scripture of the Week:

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

Hebrews 10:23–24

- What does this passage mean, in your own words?
- After studying chapters 1 and 2 this week, how does this passage connect to Paul's letter?

WEEK 3



This week, we'll be covering chapters 3 and 4 of 1 Thessalonians. Timothy has gone to visit the church and brings back words of encouragement about the way they are living their lives. Paul now takes a turn in his letter, giving instructions on how believers should live in light of the resurrection and the hope of future glory. We will continue to memorize Scripture and reflect on God's Word through Scripture meditation and prayer.

Scripture of the Week:

May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 3:13

WEEK 3

DAY 1

- Read chapter 3.

Amidst the suffering that Timothy, Paul, and Silas have experienced, their relationship with the church of Thessalonica matters enough for them to send Timothy for a visit. Timothy returns to Paul and Silas with encouraging news that the believers in Thessalonica are steadfast in their faith and continuing to spread the gospel. At the end of chapter 3, they pray that the church would continue to grow in love for one another and those around them. In John 13:35, Jesus says that the world will know followers of Jesus by the way that they love one another. This is the mark of who we are as followers of God.

- Discussion Questions:

» Is your life marked by the way you love others?

» Where is an area that you need to grow in loving those around you?

- Scripture of the Week:

» Write out the verse of the week three times. As you do, read the verses out loud, working on memorizing it word-for-word.

DAY 2

- Read chapter 4.

The idea of holiness comes up all across Scripture. It's a characteristic of our God. He is holiness, the definition and standard of what it means to be holy. In chapter 4, Paul, Timothy, and Silas call the church to continue in the way of holiness. Through the Holy Spirit, our desires as believers have changed. We do not live for our flesh; instead, we live to please and honor God, including the way that we steward our bodies and desires. The world will notice the way we live differently—set apart and holy. It is also helpful for believers to live small, quiet lives, not making too much of ourselves, but instead, living humbly and obediently in our purpose as believers.

- Discussion Questions:
 - » In your own words, what does it mean to live a holy life?

WEEK 3

- » In what ways have you not been living in holiness?

- » Is there anything you need to confess to a small group leader, parent, or staff member?

- Scripture of the Week:
 - » Write or type out the Scripture and put it where you will see it often, helping you commit it to memory (for example, put it on a sticky note in your car, write it on your bathroom mirror, make it the lock screen of your phone, etc.).

DAY 3

- Guided Prayer | Response to 1 Thessalonians 4

Dear Father,

Thank you for sending your one and only Son to die on the cross so that I can be in a relationship with you. Today, I acknowledge that I get to walk in a way that pleases and honors you in all that I do (v. 1) But Lord, I ask for your help and guidance in _____.

Thank you for designing me without mistake. My body was created and designed by you, to bring honor and glory to you. Lord, please help me to control my body. Help me to pursue holiness and honor and not to let sexual desires have any control over me (v. 4–5)

I am thankful that you are a God who forgives and extends mercy to me when I sin. I want to confess _____ to you now.

Father, help me and teach me to love others as you do (v. 9) Help me to be dependent on no one except you (v. 10). I am often tempted to place my trust in _____ and not always in you.

God, you are faithful, you are just, and your love is steadfast. You are a God who is close to his people. I am grateful that I have your Word as a guide and am able to put my hope in your second coming.

Amen.

- Scripture of the Week:

- » Today is the last day to practice memorizing the Scripture of the week. Challenge yourself to write on the verse as much as you remember. Even if it's not perfect word-for-word, understanding the concept of the passage is still helpful!

WEEK 4



Scripture of the Week:

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

Thessalonians 5:23

DAY 1

- Read chapter 5:1–11

The beginning of chapter 5 really highlights the importance of living holy lives, putting God on display for the world as we wait for the Lord's return. The encouragement here is that we won't be caught off guard but will be doing good works and living well when Christ returns to take us home. The Day of the Lord is talked about all throughout Scripture. While believers look forward to this day with hope, for nonbelievers, this day will bring judgment and darkness. It's not something to take lightly, for no one knows the time and day of the Lord's return.

- Discussion Questions:

» What would it look like for believers to “stay alert,” as Paul warns?

» Does the Day of the Lord make you hopeful or fearful? Why?

- Scripture of the Week:

» Write or type out the Scripture and put it where you will see it often, helping you commit it to memory (for example, put it on a sticky note in your car, write it on your bathroom mirror, make it the lock screen of your phone, etc.).

DAY 2

- Read chapter 5:12–28

Here, Paul gives a series of last commands. He delivers his instructions with love, encouraging the Thessalonians to carry on in the way of the Lord.

- Write out the different commands that Paul gives below.

- Circle the commands that you are regularly obeying.

- Which commands do you need to work on obeying more regularly?

- Scripture of the Week:

» Write down the Scripture below.

» What does this Scripture mean in your own words? Look up a definition of holiness and explain it in your own words.

DAY 3

- Guided Prayer | Response to 1 Thessalonians 5

Father,

Thank you for calling me by name and allowing me to be a part of your family (v. 4). I pray for those who don't know you yet. Father, I pray specifically for _____.

I trust that you will come like a thief in the night (v. 2) and that I can find peace and safety. But Lord, I confess there are times when it's hard to trust you and follow you. Lord, continue to help me be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet (v. 8). Lord, help me to live in peace with others. Help me to warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, and be patient with everyone (v. 14). I struggle to do _____.

well like Paul commands the church in Thessalonica.

I am grateful for your patience with me and for your mercy when I don't always get it right. Thank you that I'm able to receive salvation through you—that you died so, whether we are awake or asleep, we can live together with you (v. 10).

I want to take a minute and thank you for _____.

I am undeserving of your great love and am thankful for all you've done for me.

Amen.

- Scripture of the Week:
 - » Try to write out the Scripture for memory based on the first letter of each word below.

Scripture of the Week:

N_ m_ t_ G_ o_ p_ m_ y_ h_ i_ e_ w_, a_ m_ y_ w_ s_
a_ s_ a_ b_ b_ k_ b_ u_ o_ L_ J_ C_ c_ a_.

Thessalonians 5:23

WEEK 5



Now that we have explored the book chapter by chapter, we will finish out the reading plan by reading through the book as a whole one more time. As you go through the book, you'll be instructed through the exercise of verse mapping. There will be new ways to engage with the Scripture unlike weeks prior. Our hope is that you will have learned and gained a new understanding of the book and will be able to recognize key phrases and ideas as we finish out this series.

Scripture of the Week:

For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don't belong to darkness and night. So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clear headed.

1 Thessalonians 5:5–6

WEEK 5

DAY 1

- Today you'll read chapters 1–2 and follow the instructions below for verse mapping.
 - » Underline words and phrases that provide clear instructions on how to live.
 - » Write out to the side any words or phrases that you do not understand.
 - » Circle any key phrases that clearly describe who God is or anything about his character.

- Scripture of the Week:
 - » Read the passage out loud a few times. Write down in your own words what the verses mean.

DAY 2

- Today you'll read chapters 3–4 and follow the instructions below for verse mapping.
 - » Underline words and phrases that provide clear instructions on how to live.
 - » Write out to the side any words or phrases that you do not understand.
 - » Circle any key phrases that clearly describe who God is or anything about his character.
 - » Highlight the Scripture of the week that we pulled from chapter 3.
- Scripture of the Week:
 - » Write the passage down 3–4 times.

- » What does it mean to be children of the light?

DAY 3

- Today you'll read chapter 5 and follow the instructions for verse mapping below.
 - » Underline words and phrases that provide clear instructions on how to live.
 - » Write out to the side any words or phrases that you do not understand.
 - » Circle any key phrases that clearly describe who God is or anything about his character.
 - » Highlight the three Scriptures of the week that we pulled from chapter 5.
- Scripture of the Week:
 - » You've made it to the end! We hope that you have gotten a lot out of this practice of memorizing Scripture. On the last day, your challenge is to try to write down all of the Scriptures of the week from memory, as well as you can remember!

Scripture of the Week:

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Scripture of the Week:

Hebrews 10:23–24

Scripture of the Week:

1 Thessalonians 3:13

Scripture of the Week:

Thessalonians 5:23

Scripture of the Week:

1 Thessalonians 5:5–6

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