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FEBRUARY 2009

TEACHING PLANS

AN EXPLORATION OF THE BOOKS OF 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS

WHAT IS FAITH ALL ABOUT?

This issue we're exploring what it truly means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Whether you're new to this whole Christianity thing or have known Christ for a while, you probably have a lot of questions—a lot of the time. The apostle Paul traveled to Macedonia (now modern-day northern Greece) to share this message of Christ with the people in the city of Thessalonica. These books are his writings to these new converts, teaching them what it meant to live their new faith. Paul's advice is just as relevant to us today.

WHAT'S INSIDE ...

The goal of the *Collegiate* online features is to bring you a structured teaching plan with additional helps and relevant questions to equip you to lead a strong discussion-based lesson. Here's a breakdown of what's inside: *Getting Started* helps introduce the topic and get your students engaged in the lesson. *Need to Knows* highlights the main characters, historical context, and key verses of each lesson. *Explore the Bible* leads your students through the Scripture passages of the lesson, helping them understand the text, its historical and cultural context, and what it means to them today. *Apply to Life* gives you ideas for furthering the application of the Scripture, so students can take active steps to process what they're learning and how it impacts their lives. Be sure you also utilize the commentary provided (threadsmedia.com/collegiate) to help with your preparation and personal study of the lessons.

As always, we're here for you. Please send us your questions, thoughts, and suggestions. Let us know what we could do better and how these teaching plans could be even more relevant to your students and your ministry.

Waiting to hear from you,

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70 sheets/college ruled
11x8½in/27.9x21.5cm

notebook

→ THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 38 OF THE WINTER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "WE ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT" BY BRETT & EMILY MILLS, FROM THE ALBUM *READY TO DANCE*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

NEED TO KNOWS

CHARACTERS¹

BROTHERS—In Luke 8:21 Jesus uses the term *brothers* to refer to "those who hear and do the word of God." Paul continues Jesus' use of the term throughout his letters by calling people in the Christian community his brothers. The term appears frequently in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, most often when he is challenging the community in specific aspects of their spiritual walks.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Paul's work as a missionary is divided into three different journeys. It is most likely that 1 & 2 Thessalonians were written on his second journey, around A.D. 50–52, during which time he planted churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and helped stabilize the church in Corinth.

FOCAL PASSAGES

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-18

KEY VERSES

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-24

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all background information is from *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. Chad Brand, Charles Draper, and Archie England (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003).



BE A PART OF A TRUE COMMUNITY

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "We Are One in the Spirit" by Brett & Emily Mills playing in the background as students arrive.

Name TV shows that display some sort of community, friendship, family, coworkers, etc.

- Why are humans wired for authentic community?
- What happens when relationships never go beyond the surface?
- How does leadership (boss, professor, teacher, parent) affect a group's sense of community?

DIG DEEPER

Get Involved—Shane Claiborne, author of *The Irresistible Revolution*, is part of an "intentional community," attempting to model biblical community by living and working together. Check out thesimpleway.org to learn about the grassroots community and non-profit organization.

Watch *Lars and the Real Girl*—starring Ryan Gosling. A socially inept guy's relationship with an inflatable doll captivates his hometown.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

3). WORSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER (1 THESS. 5:16-22).

READ 1 THESS. 5:16-22.

¹⁶Rejoice always!

¹⁷Pray constantly.

¹⁸Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹Don't stifle the Spirit.

²⁰Don't despise prophecies,

²¹but test all things. Hold on to what is good.

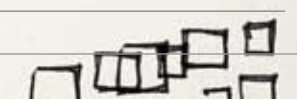
²²Stay away from every form of evil.

- Are some of Paul's commands easier than others? Which ones and why?

Notice in verse 21 Paul instructs us to test everything and then hang on to what is good.

- When it comes to books, sermons, and ideas about God and Christian living, how should we test what we hear?
- How will we know if what we are hearing is good or not?

Lined writing area for notes and reflections.



→ THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 39 OF THE WINTER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "DARKNESS FALLS" BY CALEB CARUTH, FROM THE ALBUM *DARKNESS FALLS*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

NEED TO KNOWS

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The second letter to the church at Thessalonica was written shortly after the first as a continuation of encouragement to the young church. Paul's themes in the letter include "the greatness of God, the wonder of salvation in Christ, the second coming, and the importance of life and work each day."²

FOCAL PASSAGES

2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-12

KEY VERSES

2 THESSALONIANS 1:11-12

SUFFERING WITH CHRIST

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Darkness Falls" by Caleb Caruth playing in the background as students arrive.

Read the following situations and ask your group to rank how unfair each scenario seems. 1= not a big deal 5= gross injustice.

- One 5-year-old gets three M&Ms. The other gets a whole bag.
- Your professor randomly selects half the class to earn an automatic B on the final.
- The governor's son gets an automatic pardon on all past and future speeding tickets.
- Dad abandons his family and refuses to contribute financially. Mom must support family alone.
- Government in Africa intentionally starves several communities to make a military point.

Humans seem to be wired to detect "fair" especially when we feel we're getting gypped.

- How do we sometimes skew the concept of "fair" when it relates to us?
- Define "fair" in your own words.
- Do you think God is fair? Explain.



EXPLORE THE BIBLE

3). WORTHY OF GOD'S CALLING (2 THESS. 1:11-12).

READ 2 THESS. 1:11-12.

¹¹And in view of this, we always pray for you that our God will consider you worthy of His calling, and will, by His power, fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith, ¹²so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified by you, and you by Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- According to these verses, how does God get glory from our lives?
- Why do we need His power to carry out our good works?
- Have you ever tried to do something “good” outside the power of God? What happened?

READ PSALM 116:12-15 (THE MESSAGE).

¹²What can I give back to God for the blessings he's poured out on me? ¹³I'll lift high the cup of salvation—a toast to God! I'll pray in the name of God; ¹⁴I'll complete what I promised God I'd do, and I'll do it together with his people. ¹⁵When they arrive at the gates of death, God welcomes those who love him.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of two columns of horizontal lines. The left column has 20 lines, and the right column has 20 lines. There are some faint, illegible markings at the top and bottom of the page.

→ THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 40 OF THE WINTER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "SOLID ROCK (ON CHRIST THE SOLID ROCK)" BY PASSION, FROM THE ALBUM *HYMNS ANCIENT & MODERN*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

NEED TO KNOWS

CHARACTERS

The "man of lawlessness" in 2 Thess. 2:3 is probably the same person as the antichrist from the Book of Revelation. This is the man who, armed with satanic power, will oppose Christ in the end times.

FOCAL PASSAGES

2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-17

KEY VERSES

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13-14

STANDING FIRM IN SHAKY TIMES

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Solid Rock (On Christ the Solid Rock)" by Passion playing in the background as students arrive.

Divide your students into three groups and give each group one of the following passages of Scriptures and ask them to discuss the questions that follow:

Acts 1:4-11
2 Thessalonians 2:1-12
Matthew 24:4-14

- Who determines and controls the events of the last days?
- Why do you think God doesn't reveal every detail of the last days?
- What things do we know for certain will happen before the return of Christ?
- Just because we will never know everything, should we stop studying end-time events?
- Is there a difference between studying the end times for entertainment and studying to grow closer to God?



EXPLORE THE BIBLE

1). REJECT TEACHINGS THAT ARE NOT BIBLICAL (2 THESS. 2:1-4).

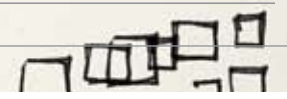
READ 2 THESS. 2:1-4.

¹Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him: we ask you, brothers, ²not to be easily upset in mind or troubled, either by a spirit or by a message or by a letter as if from us, alleging that the Day of the Lord has come.

³Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. ⁴He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God's sanctuary, publicizing that he himself is God.

- Why are believers fascinated by end-time events?
- What crazy Armageddon/end-time theories have you come across?
- How do you distinguish between speculation and biblical truth?
- What do people gain by spreading false teaching about the end times?
- Verse 2 tells us not to become unsettled or alarmed at false prophecy. Have you ever been unsettled by an end-time theory?

Lined writing area for notes and reflections.



→ THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 41 OF THE WINTER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.

NEED TO KNOWS

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

SHOW A MAP OR LIST STATS ON PAUL'S THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS. IF YOU HAVE A STUDY BIBLE THERE IS PROBABLY A MAP OF PAUL'S JOURNEY IN THE BACK. IF NOT, THE WEB WILL HAVE PLENTY OF RESOURCES.

FOCAL PASSAGES

2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-18

KEY VERSE

1 THESSALONIANS 3:13



WORK FAITHFULLY TO BUILD UP EACH OTHER

GETTING STARTED

If your church has a partnership with local or overseas missionaries, print information about one family to share with your group. If you need ideas, visit thetask.org for missionary bios and current images from the field.

- Why is it important to study the advancement of the gospel in other countries?
- How is our task as believers the same around the world?
- How are missionaries sometimes seen as “super spiritual”?

DIG DEEPER

Found on page 41 of *Collegiate* magazine:

“The evangelization of the world is a desperate struggle with the Prince of Darkness and with everything his rage can stir up in the shape of obstacles, vexations, oppositions, and hatred, whether by circumstances or by the hand of man. It is a serious task. Oh, it should mean a life of consecration.”

—Francois Collard, missionary of the Zambesi

Get Involved: One of your responsibilities as a member of the body of Christ is to pray continually for those doing God's work around the world. The book *Operation World* (operationworld.org) is a great resource to help guide your global prayers.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

2). PERSIST IN FAITHFULNESS (2 THESS. 3:3-5).

READ 2 THESS. 3:3-5.

³But the Lord is faithful; He will strengthen and guard you from the evil one. ⁴We have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do what we command. ⁵May the Lord direct your hearts to God's love and Christ's endurance.

Again Paul reiterates that God is our source of strength for obedience and holiness:

- What do you think Paul means when he prays for the Thessalonians that God would “direct your hearts”?
- Why does sharing the gospel require both love and endurance?

Handwriting practice lines consisting of two columns of horizontal lines. The left column has 20 lines and the right column has 20 lines.

