

Every believer is called to go and make disciples. This is the great commission. It's a Christian's marching orders. But how do we accomplish that in our everyday lives?

Paul gives us detailed instructions on both evangelism (sharing Christ) and discipleship (helping believers to grow in their faith) in his first letter to the Thessalonians. As Jesus' return draws near, we need to boldly go into the world, be His light among the nations, and await the blessed hope before us.

DAY ONE

You are embarking on an inductive Bible study, a study that allows God to speak through His Word as Scripture interprets Scripture. In order to do that you have to have a grasp of the book you are studying, so we begin by completing a thorough overview. A thorough overview will allow you to set the context of the book. That is our goal for this week's study. We want to get the big picture of the book as a whole before we begin to dissect it chapter by chapter and verse by verse. Every step this week will help us to understand the context of I Thessalonians.

You will find the book of I Thessalonians typed out with plenty of space to mark and jot some notes. These are called Observation Worksheets. These are worksheets! Please use them as such. Mark them up; make notes on them. That is how you will learn!

1. You are approaching the Word of God which is God's recorded message written by men, inspired by God, chosen to impart God's truths to His beloved children. You can only understand these truths when God reveals them to your heart through His Spirit. In order to be taught by the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, you must pray for God to open your eyes of understanding before beginning each day of study. Put on your armor, pick up your sword, prepare your heart for battle through prayer, and let's dive in.
2. Today you are going to begin by reading the whole book of I Thessalonians. Most people tend to view the Bible as a group of books broken up into individual autonomous chapters. They miss the beauty of how the Bible, from start to finish, is God's love-letter to us, to instruct us and show us how to live. If someone you love has taken the time to write to you, you are going to sit down and read the whole letter. You wouldn't read a paragraph or two and then set it aside for a later time.

I Thessalonians

Lesson 1, Overview

Approach the letter of I Thessalonians the same way. Read what Paul, inspired by God, has to say in its entirety. It shouldn't take you more than 15-20 minutes. Don't stop to think about it. Just read it straight through. Once you finish, jot down your initial impressions of this letter.

3. There are different literary styles in the Bible, There are prophetic, historical, letters, proverbial, poetic, biographical, and doctrinal books. When reading through I Thessalonians, what type of literature do you think it is?
4. Did you answer #3 by saying that I Thessalonians was a letter? If you did, you are correct. Every letter has an author who wrote it and an intended audience (the recipients), the Thessalonians in this case. Read the letter again. This time as you read, you are going to be looking at the author of the letter. As you read, get a colored pencil (I use blue) and underline every reference to the author. It could be his name, a synonym referring to him, or a pronoun like I, me, my, etc. At this point in time, unless you are experienced at this type of study, I would encourage you not to be concerned about plural pronouns like "we" or "us." When you are done reading through the book and marking the author, record what you learn by asking the 5 W's and H questions (who, what, where, when, why, and how) about the author. Just look for the obvious things that you learn about him at this time. Fill in what you learn on the chart entitled "Author and Recipients" on the next page in the column labeled "Author." Don't forget to indicate chapter and verse of where you found your information.

Author & Recipients

Author	Recipients

DAY TWO

1. Remember to start your time in prayer and then read through I Thessalonians again. This time you are going to look for the recipients of this letter and mark them. I underline mine in green. Mark any references of their name or synonyms and pronouns referring to them. This time you are going to look for pronouns like “you” or “your”. When you are done, record what you learn on page 3 by asking the 5 W’s and H about the recipients. Do the best you can and know that you are learning with each step you take. It will be well worth your effort in the end.
2. If you have ever received a letter, note, or message from someone, it has probably left you with a certain feeling. It may have been excitement, joy, anxiety, anger, hurt, or a combination of these feelings. This is called the atmosphere. Read through I Thessalonians again. As you read and think about what you have learned about the author and recipients, how would you describe the atmosphere of this letter?
3. This assignment may be a little harder, but give it your best shot. Read through I Thessalonians one more time. Keeping in mind all that you have learned to this point about the author, recipients, type of literature, and atmosphere, let’s see what you can learn about the time period in which they lived. This will give you the historical background of the book. Record what you learn about the culture, the time period, and the religious background of the time.
4. You have one last job to do today before we end this lesson. There is an “At a Glance Chart” on the book of I Thessalonians at the end of this lesson on page 10. Fill in the author, recipients, and historical references that could help to pinpoint dates.

DAY THREE

Studying inductively is like pulling back layers on an onion. You pull off one layer and it exposes the next. So far you have read through the book of I Thessalonians at least five different times. You should read it at least five more times over the next couple of days. You are beginning to acquire a sense of the book and certain topics may have already started to reveal themselves to you. To continue the overview process, we want to focus in on key words. You have already done some of that on day one and two. You marked and made lists of the author and recipients which are, in a letter, key words.

Introduction to Key Words

You are going to be looking for key words today. Let me explain what a key word is. A key unlocks a door. A key word unlocks the meaning of the book you are reading. So the question becomes, how do you find a key word? You have probably found some by now, and you are not even aware of them. A key word is an important word that is repeated throughout the book. If that word would be removed, you would lose a big part of the meaning and purpose of the book.

When you find key words, you are going to mark them on your observation worksheets. You want to use different colors and different symbols. There is no right way or wrong way to do this. I am not an artist so I tend to go with simple symbols and shapes like arrows, stars, triangles, squares, underlines, etc. On pages 11-12 of this lesson, I have included sample pages of possible symbols. The important thing is that you use the same symbol and color for a particular word throughout your study. When you do, these key words will pop off the page at you.

When you read through the book looking at and marking one or two key words, you will find even more that strike you. When this happens, read through again and mark those. One warning though. It is a key word to the book when it is mentioned all the way through the book. You may find a word that is repeated in one particular chapter but not the entire book. That word may be a key to that chapter but not to the book itself. We will mark those at a later time. If you mark it now and then realize later that it was only key to that chapter, it's okay. Just don't list that particular word on your list of key words for the book.

Any mention of the Godhead (God, Jesus, Holy Spirit) are always key; however, depending on how many times they are mentioned and how much time you have to put into your study, it may be a bit overwhelming to mark them at this time. If you choose not to mark them now, you will mark them, and make lists about them when we go to the chapter studies later on.

With that background, I believe you are ready for your assignment for today.

1. Read through I Thessalonians and jot down a couple of words that are repeated throughout the book.
2. Determine the symbols that you will use to mark these words. Write these words and their corresponding symbol on an index card that you can use as a bookmark.

Here are two links that gives information on inductive study. The first one is on our site. Under “Handouts” there are two links that give you ideas for marking key words. The other site is for Precept Austin which gives good information about observation and key words.

<https://www.walkinlight.net/inductive-bible-stury> (yes, study is spelled wrong!)
<https://www.preceptaustin.org/observation#identify%20key%20words>

3. Read through the book again and mark these key words. If, as you are marking, you see other words that are repeated, jot them down here and then read the book again and mark those.
4. Record your key words on the “At a Glance Chart on page 10.

Some of you may be able to mark three or more words at a time. Some of you may only be able to mark one word at a time. Let me encourage you. If you are one that can only mark one at a time, it will take you longer to complete this assignment than other students, but think of the blessings you will have because you have read and struggled over this book many more times. You will be blessed by your effort.

DAY FOUR

If you have not completed the assignment for key words, please complete that before you move on.

1. When you mark key words, it is important to make a list of what you learn about those words, just like you did for the author and recipient. On another piece of paper, record the key word and then list what you learn about that word remembering to indicate chapter and verse where you found that information. Do that for all the key words that you marked throughout I Thessalonians.
2. Next, you are going to discover general subjects or themes covered in I Thessalonians. The subjects that the author talks about center around those key words you found yesterday. One more layer of that onion is now exposed. Isn't this great? Read through I Thessalonians looking for these themes. Remember that right now you are just looking for things that are obvious. Record these general subjects on the chart on the "At a Glance Chart" on page 10 in the left-hand column entitled "Themes". You are going to do this for each chapter.
3. Looking over what you recorded for step two, do these all tie together into one major theme that runs through the entire book? Record your insights below.
4. You now know the important key words. You know the general topics covered in I Thessalonians. You may have even found a major theme that runs through the whole book. Armed with all this information, read through I Thessalonians one more time and look for the author's purpose in writing the book. In some books like Luke, John, I John, and Jude, the author plainly states the purpose of his writing. Look at Luke 1:1-4, John 20:30-31, I John 5:13, and Jude 3. Other books, the author doesn't come right out and say it. You have to acquire that information from the key words and topics the author covers. When you can see the general theme running through the entire book, you have caught a glimpse of his purpose. This is why I am writing to you! This is what I want you to see! If you can find his purpose, record that on your worksheets on page 10.

5. Are there any questions that this book has raised in your mind? You can record these in the space below. We are not going to answer them right now, but if you have those questions written out, then as you study and wade deeper into this book, you may begin discovering the answers to your questions.

DAY FIVE

I know that you have done a lot of work this week, but trust me, it is worth it. In the inductive method, there are three steps: Observation, Interpretation, and Application. In our instant world, we have been trained to do things quickly. Being able to accurately handle the Word of God is not a pursuit that can be attained without ample time. People want to jump to the “I want to know what this means and how it applies to me.” They want someone else to put the time and effort into the observation and just give them the interpretation and application. The truth of the matter is that the time spent observing God’s Word is vital to our Christian walk. If we rely on everyone else to do the work for us, then we have gained little or nothing that can sustain us through life’s trials and hardships. We find ourselves standing on the sand when the storms come wishing that we were on the rock instead. It takes time to build on the rock. The easy, quick path leads to the sand. Persevere and you will stand!

1. Before you start, begin with prayer. Ask God to reveal His truth to your heart.
2. Read straight through the book of I Thessalonians with fresh eyes.
3. Read through the book once again. If you have done all your work this week, that makes at least ten times that you have read it. Is it becoming familiar to you? Is it beginning to feel like an old friend? That is the purpose. Remember - you are gleaning the results of that observation process.

4. Read through each chapter of I Thessalonians individually. As you do, look at what you have recorded on your “At a Glance Chart.” You have recorded the major themes of each chapter already. Now it is time to try to summarize those themes into a chapter title. I record mine in pencil or on my computer, because as I continue to study through the weeks, I may decide to change a title. Record these titles on your “At a Glance Chart.” Here are some suggestions to help you determine a chapter title.
 - a. Try to use no more than four words.
 - b. Use at least one key word in your title.
 - c. Make it distinctive from the other chapter titles.
 - d. Make it descriptive. (it should describe what is in the chapter)
 - e. If possible, use a portion of a particular verse. (that will become your key verse of the chapter).
5. Now try to come up with a book title that you will record on the top of your “At a Glance Chart.” Follow the same rules as above. This book title should encompass all the chapter titles. You should be able to see how each of the chapters fits into the book title. Some people do really well with these titles. Others have great difficulty with them. If you are one of those people, that’s okay. The fact that you are wrestling with the assignment is forcing you to think differently about the information you have acquired this week. The more you do this, the easier it becomes. Be assured that you are learning just by going through the process!
6. Can you see any divisions in this short book of I Thessalonians? Some books, like Romans can be broken down into smaller sections. Romans 1-11 are doctrinal while chapters 12-16 are practical. Did you notice any of those kinds of divisions in Ephesians? If so, record them below. You could also record them on the “At a Glance Chart.”

You have spent time this week laying an important foundation on which to build in the weeks to come. This time and dedication to studying the book of I Thessalonians will help you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you were called - to fulfill that great commission to which every child of the King has been called.

I Thessalonians - At a Glance Chart

Book Title: _____

Author:	Themes and Titles Chart			Segment Divisions
	Themes		Titles	
Recipient:		Chapter 1		
Historical References (date):		2		
Purpose:		3		
		4		
Key Words:		5		

God ~~Jesus Christ~~ Spirit (Holy Spirit) holy ~~unholy~~

covenant bless curse ~~circumcised~~

~~die~~ (death) Israel (the man, nation, people) ~~sin~~ (iniquity, transgression)

remnant land eternal life

devil (evil spirits, mediums, serpent) (Israel's land given by God)

sign law (commandments) tabernacle (tent of meeting, temple, house) nations

blood

righteous ~~unrighteous~~ atonement wrath

redeem (redemption, redeemer) the coming of the Lord (His coming)

~~cry~~ pray listen (hear) love (God's love)

grace ~~suffer~~ (affliction, trial, tribulation) repent












































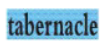




kingdom (God's or man's) believe (faith, truth)

gospel day of the Lord ("that day" if a synonym)

references to time double underline all geographical locations

PRECEPT-UPON-PRECEPT

ORIENTATION TO INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

	God, Father, Names of God		Jesus, Son of God, Son of Man, Lamb, Light, Bread, Life		Holy Spirit, God's Spirit, Spirit of God
	Atonement, Atonement, Covered, Covered over		Believe, Faith, Truth		Bless, Blessings
	Blood		Circumcise, Circumcised		Coming of the Lord, His coming
	Covenant, Promise, Agreement		Cross, Crucify, Crucifixion		Cross of Victory
	Crown, Reward		Cry, Weep, Wail		Curse
	Day of the Lord, The Lord's Day, That day		Death, Dead, Die		Satan, Devil, Evil Spirits, demons, Mediums, Serpents
	Eternal life		Evil		Look, See, Behold, Beheld Witnessed
	Judge, Judging, Judgment		God's love		Gospel, Message
	Grace, Loving kindness		Holy, Holiness		Nation of Israel, the land, Hebrews, Jews, Jacob
	Kingdom (God's or man's)		Law, Commandments		Listen, Hear
	Locations, Cities, Countries, Parts of buildings		Love		Nations, Gentiles
	Poured out		Pray, Prayed, Prayer		Rain, Flood
	Redeem, Redemption		Remnant		Repent, Repentance
	Righteous, Righteousness		Signs, Miracles, Wonders		Sin, Iniquity, Transgression
	Suffer		Tabernacle		Time ("until", "then", "when", "after", etc.) Feasts
	"Un-", "Dis-" before a word		Terms of Conclusion (therefore, so, for, finally, wherefore)		Wrath, Anger