

EXEGETICAL PROCESS NOTEBOOK¹

NAME: _____ Scott Wills _____
PASSAGE: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 [Identify by the 4th week of class]

“The aim of exegesis is to make as explicit as possible the precise meaning of a text. This is done when the proper connotation of the words and concepts is found and when the text is placed in the context of the presuppositions, questions, and concerns of its author.”
--A. Malherbe

Instructions: Use this template for your investigation of a biblical text and answer the questions thoroughly and with supporting evidence. Include scriptural references for easy referral later when you begin to write your projects. There are no page limits for any of the steps, just be satisfied that you have adequately gathered all that you can (time permitting).

This “Exegetical Process Notebook” is your *WORK PRODUCT* that lays the foundation for the final course project. It is *NOT* the project itself, but it contains everything you need to know about your passage before you decide (1) which theological connections to make in a sermon, (2) key points to explain in a bible study, emphasize in staff training, or include in support of a conference topic, and (3) what private and public attitudes/behaviors best reflect the character of Christ.

Important Working Assumptions:

1. Always start with “what” questions before attempting to answer “why” or “how.”
2. Always do your own close reading first before referring to a commentary or secondary scholarly resource.
3. Recognize that what you think initially about a text (without prayerful critical reflection) is not the same as what the Holy Spirit intends. Let each author and each passage have its own voice within its own context before ever attempting to apply it to yourself or a ministry context.
4. The original audience is different from us in most every way possible except for their basic human condition and need of Christ. This includes language, culture, social values and norms, religious worldview, politics, family structure, etc. Consider this notebook as your *PASSPORT* into the foreign country of the original human author and recipients. Do not assume you will understand the language or customs of these ancient peoples without preparing for this journey.
5. The nature of inspiration is such that God used every day, flawed individuals to preserve a trustworthy/true authoritative message that is efficacious for salvation. Thus, eventually shift your attention *from* solving the identity of the original author *to* understanding the message being conveyed.
6. With every interpretive act you are creating sacred space in which to encounter a free and living God.
7. Do not assume the message will simply reaffirm cherished beliefs. Surprisingly at times, God’s message is just as much a word *against* us as a word *for* us.

¹ Adapted from Dr. William Barclay, Gordon Conwell
<http://www.gordonconwell.edu/charlotte/current/documents/chareg-nt502-barclay-su12.pdf>
Accessed Sept. 1, 2016. Also, from Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. Third edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. Refer to the appropriate sections of Fee’s text for further clarifications and discussions.

STEP 1. SURVEY THE GENERAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Read the entire document through in English in one sitting (aloud), considering the specific prompt questions in the syllabus (Week 1): YES _____ NO _____

1.1 AUTHOR. (a) **What do you observe about the identity of the author and his circumstances?**
(b) **What else do you know about the life of the author and his situation at the time of writing that might influence the exegesis of this text?**

Always start with the biblical book in front of you. You can learn quite a bit about the author from his own words (e.g., does his language skill reflect a high level of education, does he appear to quote the Scriptures directly from the Hebrew Bible or has he altered the text in some way (may indicate the use of the Greek Septuagint), is he in prison or under duress of some kind, etc.). Make your own observations; then check the secondary literature (New Testament and Old Testament Introductions, Critical Commentaries, Critical Bible Dictionaries) to see what they add to your initial observations.

Author(s): 1:1 – names “Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy” –

It appears as if Paul is writing with, or on behalf of, all three men.

He frequently uses plural pronouns – examples:

1:2 – **We** always give thanks...

1:4 – For **we** know...

2:1 – that **our** coming to you...

2:9 – You remember **our** labor and toil...

3:1 - **..we** could bear it no longer...

3:10 – Night and day **we** pray most earnestly that **we** may see you face t face...

4:1 - **..we** ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from **us**...

4:13 – But **we** do not want...

4:15 – For this **we** declare...

5:12 – But **we** appeal to you...

Although plural pronouns are used throughout the letter, Paul gives an indication that he is the author of the letter itself:

2:18 – For we wanted to come to you – **certainly I, Paul,** wanted to again and again...

Although Timothy is named in 1:1 – he is also mentioned as a second party – indicating that he is not the author.

3:2 - **..and we** sent Timothy...

3:6 - But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love.

It is unclear from the text whether the letter was constructed by all three men, whether Paul wrote it on behalf of the three men, or whether Paul dictated to Silvanus and / or Timothy serving as amanuenses.

According to Craig S. Keener, in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, “the vast majority of scholars acknowledge 1 Thessalonians to be Pauline, most recognizing it as Paul’s first extant letter.”²

Thomas L. Constable offers clarity in his 1 Thessalonians entry in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: The Apostle Paul was the writer of this epistle. His name appears first and he spoke of himself in the singular elsewhere in the letter (e.g., 3:5).....Silas and Timothy joined Paul in sending 1 Thessalonians; that is, Paul wrote for them as well as for himself. Perhaps Silas served as Paul’s amanuensis, or secretary. Frequently in 1 Thessalonians Paul wrote “we” so he was either including these brethren in his thoughts (e.g., 1:2; 2:1; etc.) or using an editorial “we”*.³

Circumstances:

- Paul notes their thankfulness for the faith and labor of the Thessalonians (1:3) that has become known “in every place” (1:8).
- It is noted that they desired to be with the Thessalonians “face-to-face” (2:17), but have been blocked by Satan (2:18).
- It is also noted that there has been expected persecution experienced by the Thessalonians (1:6; 3:3-4).

The *New International Dictionary of the Bible* suggests that “Some of [Paul’s] Jewish enemies had attacked his character, putting him under obligation to defend himself” citing 2:1-6, 10, 14-16 as evidence.⁴ The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* similarly states that Paul’s “words suggest that people outside the church were charging him with unworthy motives and improper conduct”.⁵ Keener, however, while noting their reported mistreatment in Philippi (2:2), asserts that “Paul need not be responding to actual opponents in this section”.⁶

1.2. RECIPIENTS: (a) **What are your observations about the identity of the recipients?** *Be careful to base your observations on what the text says, not what you have always heard.* (b) **Are there any hints about their ethnicity or socioeconomic and cultural contexts?** (c) **Where do the recipients live?** *Are there direct or indirect hints that help you identify the geographic region?* (d) **What are their present circumstances?** (e) **What historical situation occasioned this writing?** (f) **What is the relationship between the author and the recipients?**

Hypothesize about the answers to these questions from your observations. If you are unable to answer any of these questions give an initial reason why not. Perhaps the text only provides suggestive clues with gaps you will need to fill in with caution.

² Craig S. Keener, “1 Thessalonians,” in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1993), 583.

³ Thomas L. Constable, “1 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, (USA: Victor Books, 1983), 690.

⁴ Merrill C. Tenney, “Letters to the Thessalonians,” in *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 1009.

⁵ Thomas L. Constable, “1 Thessalonians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, (USA: Victor Books, 1983), 693.

⁶ Craig S. Keener, “1 Thessalonians,” in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1993), 586.

Recipients: Paul, Silvanus and Timothy write to:

- The church (plural conglomeration of churches) of the Thessalonians (1:1)
- Indication of conglomeration found in 5:27 - "I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all of them."

The city of Thessalonica was likely a consolidation of small towns, which became the heavily fortified and prosperous chief port of Macedonia. The population included a large Roman element and a Jewish colony.⁷

1.3 PURPOSE: (1) **What can you discern about the author's purpose for writing?** Does the author explicitly say anything about it, or is the purpose implied (through suggestive clues)? *Be attentive here. Authors share certain preunderstandings with their audience that need not be stated (i.e., the author and recipients are privy to information well-known to each that we would have no way of knowing). Your job will be to make the implicit clear, i.e., what is implied needs to be explained carefully.* (2) **What is the overall theme or concern?** *Did you notice words or ideas that were frequently repeated? Did you notice special word choices or exhortations/ideas that fit the overall presentation? What might these repetitions, vocabulary, or ideas tell you about the purpose of the writing?* (3) **Does the argument or narrative have an easily discerned outline, or does it seem to be a loose, thematic collection of sayings or teachings** (e.g. Sermon on the Mount or James)? *You need not work out the outline here, just observe!*

The authors seem to be praising and encouraging the church in Thessalonica during or following a period of persecution (1:6; 2:14; 3:1-3)

- Paul, Silvanus and Timothy desired to hear how the faith of the Thessalonians held up under persecution (3:5), and they desire to "restore whatever is lacking" in their faith (3:10).
- Paul seeks to address some issues in the church, as well - "As for other matters" (4:1) - such as:
 - o Sanctification - separation from former pagan ways (4:3-8)
 - o Love for neighbors and living respectably (4:9-12)
 - o Future hope and the return of Christ (4:13-5:11)
 - o General Instruction (5:12-26)

The New International Dictionary of the Bible summarizes well the occasion of 1 Thessalonians as "intended to encourage the Thessalonians' growth as Christians and to settle the questions that were troubling them."⁸

⁷ Edward M. Blaiklock, "Thessalonica," in *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 1010.

⁸ Merrill C. Tenney, "Letters to the Thessalonians," in *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 1009.

Keener points out various themes for the letter, which, he adds, is typical for ancient letters. The extended section of thanksgiving suggest it falls within the ancient category of a “letter of thanksgiving”. Others suggest a “letter of comfort,” a “letter of praise,” or a “letter of friendship”.⁹

STEP 2. CONFIRM THE LIMITS OF YOUR PASSAGE.

Decide where your *pericope* [i.e., “self-contained unit”] begins and ends. *Examine whether or not the paragraphs and divisions in your bibles correctly reflect the limits of your chosen passage.*

For non-language students, it is best to compare the paragraphing of several modern translations (e.g. NRSV, TNIV, NET, AV, NASB, NKJV, etc. Fee, p. 12). Where do the translation differ as far as paragraph length and divisions? Then decide for yourself what the basic unit is. (Your conclusions should be based on your own observations from these texts). *The final decision is part of the exegetical process. Choose passages approximately 5-10 verses for a project this size.*

“The passage I intend to investigate is 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8.”
(E.g. John 2:1-11, the narration of the wedding at Cana)

STEP 3. BECOME THOROUGHLY ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR PARAGRAPH/PERICOPE (Fee, 12).

3.1. Read the paragraph through in 5-7 translations and *note the differences* among the translations. Copy these translations and mark well these differences using colored highlights. *List the differences here.* (WHY DO THIS STEP? Without knowledge of biblical languages one can miss the different options translators have when moving from one language to another. *THERE IS NO ONE TO ONE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN LANGUAGES.*)

For example:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, (Phil. 2:5 NRS)

You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had (Phi 2:5 NET)

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, (Phi 2:5 ESV)

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: (Phi 2:5 NIV)

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, (Phi 2:5 NAB)

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 –

⁹ Craig S. Keener, “1 Thessalonians,” in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1993), 584.

Verse 1 -

You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, (NRSV)

GENDER INCLUSIVE

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. (NKJV)

FOR OMITTED
1063-GAL
FOR I SAME,
THEY, WHOED

You, [yourselves omitted] know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. (NIV)

INCLUSIVE

2756 - KEARS
EMPTY, FOOLISH,
WORDLESS,
VACUITY

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. (ESV)

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, (NASB)

0846 - AGIOS - HE, SHE, IT, SELF, SAME, THEY

Verse 2 -

but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. (NRSV)

NO GREEK

² But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. (NKJV)

BUT OMITTED
0235 ALLA
EST, PRAEVS,
OBTINE CONTRARY

² We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. (NIV)

² But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. (ESV)

OPPOSTION
CONFLICT
0073 -
AG-ON
GATHERING,
CONTEST

² but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. (NASB)

5195 - HUBRIZO - TO BOAST, TO INSULT

Verse 3 -

³ For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, (NRSV)

ERROR

³ For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. (NKJV)

³ For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. (NIV)

³ For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive. (ESV)

³ For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; (NASB)

1106 -
PLANE
ERROR

0167 -
AKATHARSIA
UNCLEANNESS

1388 - DOLUS
DECEIT, CUNNING

- SAME OR VERY SIMILAR WORDING
- SAME WORDING IN SOME VERSIONS, BUT NOT ALL 5 SOME VARIATION
- SOME VARIATION IN WORDING SAME / SIMILAR MEANING.
- VARIATION IN WORDING AND / OR MEANING
- NOTES ON GREEK WORDS USED WITH POSSIBLE DEFINITIONS

Verse 4 -

4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. (NRSV)

4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. (NKJV)

4 On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. (NIV)

4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. (ESV)

4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. (NASB)

"BUT OMITTED GUK-ALLA-BUT"

"SO WE SPEAK" OMITTED - 3779 - HOITO THAS, SO, WITH WH 2980 - LALEO TO SPEAK

1381 - DOKIMAZO TO PROVE, APPROVE, TEST

Verse 5 -

5 As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; (NRSV)

5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. (NKJV)

5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. (NIV)

5 For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. (ESV)

5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness— (NASB)

ORDEN DIFFERS

4392 - PROPHASIS - MOTIVE, FAKE MOTIVE, EXCUSE, PRETEXT
4124 - PLEONEXIA - GREEDINESS, LUST, HOVARTAGE

Verse 6 -

6 nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, (NRSV)

6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. (NKJV)

6 We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. (NIV)

6 Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. (ESV)

6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. (NASB)

0922 - BAROS - HEAVENESS, WEIGHT BURDEN, TANGLE

OMITS "DEMANDS" "ASSERTED AUTHORITY" -> APPEARS IN VERSE 17 IN NRSV

1391 - DOXA - OPINION, GLORY

Verse 7 -

APPEARS IN VERSE 6 IN OTHER VERSIONS

7 though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. (NRSV)

7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. (NKJV)

7 Instead, we were like young children^{al} among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, (NIV)

7 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. (ESV)

7 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. (NASB)

1096 - GINOMAI -
TO BECOME, BE, BECOME
BE CREATED

5162 - TRUOPHOS -
NURSE

2182 - THALPO -
TO WARM, TAKE CARE OF

Verse 8 -

8 So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us. (NRSV)

8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. (NKJV)

8 so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. (NIV) *OMITS "BECAUSE... DEAR TO US."*

3655 -
HUMENOMAI -
TO YEARN FOR

8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (ESV)

8 Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. (NASB)

1438 - HEASTON -
OF HIMSELF -
HIS OWN

5390 - PSUCHE -
SOUL
SELF -
INNER LIFE

2106 - EUDOKEO -
TO BE WELL PLEASED,
TO CONSENT
TO ENJOY

3330 - METADIDOMI -
TO IMPART, SHARE,
DISTRIBUTE

3.2 Determine which of these differences are exegetically significant (e.g. are the differences a matter of synonyms, grammar, stylistic or theological preference, or textual criticism? Do these differences alter the meaning in any way? Does a particular translation have slightly different theological implications? Which is closer to the original author’s meaning given the overall argument?)

In the above example, notice the difference between the choice of “same mind,” “same attitude,” “same mindset,” or “this mind.” Do these synonyms mean the same thing? What does each add to the meaning of the text? Notice the words in green: What is the difference between “in you,” “toward one another,” “among yourselves,” and “in your relationships with one another”? What difference might these observations make in a sermon?

Explain these differences as far as you can (develop a hypothesis of which translation you think is the best rendering of the passage and explain why this hypothesis best explains these differences based on supporting evidence). *Pay particular attention to marginal notes that usually refer to matters of textual criticism. NET translator notes (included in the Accordance package) are particularly helpful.*

You will be coming back to these initial observations to check your initial ideas with a good critical commentary for deeper insight. Hypotheses can always be revised the more you investigate.

The variations appear to be minor, having little or no impact on the meaning of the passages.

Verse 1 –

Verse 1 begins “You yourselves…” or “For you yourselves…” except in the NIV, which only has “you” not “yourselves” – this does not impact the meaning of the verse. The phrase “our coming to you” is rendered “visit” only in the NIV – no impact on meaning. All but the NIV end with “not in vain,” which the NIV translates “not without results”. The Greek word is *kenos* (2756) – empty, foolish, worthless, vacuity. Their visit was not worthless.

Verse 2 –

All but the NIV begin with the word “but” – Greek *alla* (0235) – but, rather, on the contrary. There is some variation in “had courage” (NRSV), “were bold” (NKJV), “had boldness” (ESV and NASB), and “with the help of” (NIV). The Greek word *hparrēsiazomai* (3955) means ‘to speak with boldness’; and “in” is the Greek word *en* (1722) – in, with, by, to. They were “shamefully treated” (ESV), “shamefully mistreated” (NRSV), “spitefully treated” (NKJV), “treated outrageously” (NIV), “mistreated” (NASB). The Greek word *hubrizō* means – to boast, to insult. Finally, they had boldness to speak the gospel in the midst of “opposition” (NRSV, NIV, NASB) or “conflict” (NKJV, ESV). The Greek word used is *agōn* (0073) – gathering, contest – their message was contested.

Verse 3 –

Their appeal did not spring from “error” in all 4 versions except NRSV, which says “deceit”. The Greek here is *plane* (4106) – error. Each verse ends with “deceive” (ESV), “deceit” (NKJV, NASB), “trick” (NIV), “trickery” (NRSV) – the Greek word *dolos* (1388) – deceit, cunning. Unclear why NRSV would translate “error” as “deceit”, when the last word in the list is also “deceit”.

Verse 4 –

Minor variations in wording exist. Verse 4 ends “God who tests our hearts” in all versions except NASB, which says “God who examines our hearts”. Greek word is *dokimazō* (1381) – to prove, approve, test.

Verse 5 –

There is variation in order of words used in verse 5. NRSV, ESV and NASB speak of “pretext of greed”; NIV says “a mask to cover up greed”; and the NKJV is most different saying “cloak of covetousness”. The Greek words used are *prophasis* (4392) – motive, false motive, excuse, pretext, and *pleonexia* (4124) – greediness, lust, advantage.

Verse 6 –

In verse 6, Paul states they did not seek “praise” (NRSV, NIV) or “glory” (NKJV, ESV, NASB). The Greek word *doxa* (1391) is used meaning opinion, glory. The NKJV and ESV speak of not having made demands. This phrase appears in the NRSV in verse 7, not verse 6. And the NIV and NASB speak of not asserting their authority. The Greek word *baros* (0922) is used, meaning heaviness, weight, burden, trouble, making ‘demands’ a better translation; they could have ‘been a burden’.

Verse 7 –

In verse 7, four versions say they were “gentle among you,” but the NIV translates “were like young children among you” – an interesting interpretation, given Paul then refers to themselves as a “nurse” (NRSV) or “nursing mother” (NKJV, NIV, ESV, NASB). The Greek word *trophos* (5162) means ‘nurse’.

Verse 8 –

Verse 8 has several minor variations. The opening phrase varies for each verse: “So deeply do we care for you” (NRSV); “So, affectionately longing for you” (NKJV); “so we cared for you” (NIV); “So, being affectionately desirous of you” (ESV); “Having so fond an affection for you” (NASB). Although the basic meaning of each variation is similar, the Greek word used is *homeiromai* (2655) – To yearn for. Each verse ends with the phrase “you had become very dear to us,” except the NIV which seems to place a variation of the phrase at the beginning of the sentence as “Because we loved you so much”. They “shared” (NRSV, NIV, ESV) or “imparted” (NKJV, NASB) the gospel – Greek *metadidōmi* (3330) – to impart, to share, distribute. They shared the gospel because they were “determined” (NRSV); “well pleased” (NKJV, NASB); “delighted” (NIV); “ready” (ESV). The Greek word *eudokeō* (2106) is used, meaning “to be well pleased; to consent; to enjoy”. They shared not only the gospel, but also their own “selves” (NRSV, ESV) or “lives” (NKJV, NIV, NASB). This Greek term is *psuchē* – meaning ‘soul, self, inner life’.

STEP 4: LITERARY CONTEXT

4.1 Identify the particular literary character of the document (i.e., narratives, psalms, law, Gospel, prophecy, epistle, apocalypse, etc.) and be alert to the fact that specific genre issues will arise.

For **epistles**, do you suspect the letter is *ad hoc* (addressing a specific local situation), formal (perhaps meant for a wider general audience), casual (friendly and exhortative), or perhaps more representative of a treatise or extended sermon (e.g. Hebrews) than a letter (Fee, 17)? *This observation is foundational before working through the next steps.*

For **narratives**, is your pericope/passage a narration of an event or a specific teaching/saying aimed at a particular group or character (e.g., parable, prophetic utterance, poetic utterance, etc.)? Consider whether this story or saying employs metaphor, overstatement, irony, etc. that will need further investigation (Fee, 23-24; *See Step 5.2 for the rhetorical discussion*).

WHY DO THIS STEP? *You are not going to approach a letter in the same way you approach a narrative that has character, plot, and dialogue. You would not interpret a psalm in the same way you would interpret one of the commandments of Moses. There are different expectations and techniques associated with different kinds of literature*

1 Thessalonians is an epistle directed from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy and addressed to “the church of the Thessalonians” (1:1). It is clear that the letter is not directed to an individual, but to the community of believers. For example, Paul says “we always give thanks for “all of you” (1:2), and speaks of the kind of welcome “we had among you” (1:9). Further, it appears the addressed believers were of pagan origin, as it is stated “they turned to God from idols” (1:9).

4.2 Pay detailed attention to the unique characteristics of your passage’s genre (refer to the appropriate section in *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* and the power point presentations throughout the course):

1. **(Epistle) To what formal structure of an ancient letter does your particular text belong?** *For a quick overview visit http://www2.ferrum.edu/dhowell/txt_cntxt/ and click the “pathway” tab on the left and follow the directions. Is it part of the initial greeting? Is it part of the thanksgiving period typical of Paul’s letters? Will this affect your exegesis in any way? (Fee, 17).*

Chapter 2:1-8 appears to be within the body of the letter. 1 Thessalonians is somewhat difficult to outline, because much of the letter seems to be clarifying previous statements! The word “for” (indicating a clarification or expansion of a previous thought) appears 72 times throughout the letter. This makes it somewhat difficult to determine which are primary ideas and which are

secondary or clarifying thoughts and ideas. Paul appears to be expanding on the declaration that the Thessalonians were chosen by God, which is attested to by the fact that the gospel came in power, in the Holy Spirit and in conviction. He further shows that the message was delivered in purity and love, not with deception or for personal gain.

2. **(Narrative) Does your narrative describe an event, highlight a character/s, include dialogue, sayings, OT quotations or allusions, attitudes to emulate or avoid, etc. (a)** How does the dialogue and interaction of characters illumine attitudes or behavior? **(b)** Does the event highlight something presented earlier in the text, or does it prepare us for something about to follow? **(c)** If you removed your passage from the larger narrative, how would our understanding of this event or saying be affected? *Be careful of over exegeting and making the section say more than it does.*

4.3 Give an original, detailed outline of the whole book and note the placement of your text within the outline. *Do not use the outlines you find by scholars as they lean toward a particular theological position that may/may not reflect your own reading of the entire book. The more you struggle to do these steps yourself, the better you will get at thinking theologically and exegetically.*

What I do: *I use bible software and copy/paste the entire book into a word document. Using different highlighters, I mark changes in themes, characters, geographical locations, events, or groups of exhortation, teaching, warnings, and commands, etc. I also pay attention to noticeable repetitions and color code them as well. On the side I might jot down one or two words that seem to capture something significant about the progression and interconnectedness of the different stories or arguments. Use any method that makes sense to you.*

WHY DO THIS STEP?

1. *By providing an original outline the text's own voice moves forward, while previous points of view or agendas are forced to recede. (You will test the validity of these other outlines later).*
2. *This step slows one down and forces a closer reading of the entire passage that often reveals previously overlooked details or patterns such as the overall inter-connection of the whole, how the ideas build upon one another, or how the stories, sayings, or events prepare you for what follows.*
3. *You will better situate your passage within the flow of the larger argument of the biblical book, which is the next step in an exegetical investigation.*

The following example from John 1:1-18 includes color coding that will be useful in Step 5 (of your passage only):

EVANGELIST
WORD AND

In the beginning was the Word,

INTRODUCTION OF THE

and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
² He was in the beginning with God.

HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

³ All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE WORD TO
CREATION
Why: "was" vs. "come into being"?

⁵ The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.

INTRODUCTION OF LIGHT vs.
DARKNESS

ASIDE ON
JN the BAPT

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.
⁸ He himself was not the light,
but he came to testify to the light.

⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world,
and the world came into being through him;
yet the world did not know him.

HUMAN CONDITION (BLINDNESS)

¹¹ He came to what was his own,
and his own people did not accept him.

HUMAN CONDITION (REJECTION)

¹² But to all who received him,
who believed in his name,
he gave power to become children of God,
¹³ who were born,
not of blood
or of the will of the flesh
or of the will of man,
but of God.

GOD'S REVERSAL/INITIATIVE

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

POINT WHERE WORD BECOMES
SOMETHING IT WAS NOT INITIALLY

WHO ARE THE "WE/US"?

ASIDE ON
JN the BAPT

¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out,
"This was he of whom I said,
'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'")

¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses;
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

RELATIONSHIP OF LAW AND
EFFICACY OF GRACE

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God.

It is God the only Son,
who is close to the Father's heart,
who has made him known. (Joh 1:1-18 NRS)

SON AS DIVINE REVEALER

Outline: John 1:1-18

I. Christological Encomium/Hymn

- a. 1:1-2 Introduction to the pre-incarnate existence (“isness”) of a personified Word
 - b. 1:3-4 The Word is an active agent in the world’s creation (thus, not a created being)
 - c. 1:5 Light is juxtaposed with darkness; but light is stronger
 - d. 1:6-8 [1st Aside] Role of John the Baptist: to testify to the light
 - e. 1:9-13 Discussion of the human condition of blindness that lead to rejecting the light;
But God has a plan of adoption through faith
 - f. 1:14 Pivotal point in history: The Word BECAME flesh in spite of identity with God
 - g. 1:15 [2nd Aside] Content of John’s testimony: Jesus is the greater than me
 - h. 1:16-17 Complementary relationship between Law, truth, and grace: Made possible through
The one who dwelt among “us” (eyewitnesses?)
 - i. 1:18 Jesus introduced now in his role as the revealer of God’s nature and will
- II. John’s Ministry . . . (as you continue to pay attention to the outline of an entire book)

Preliminary Outline of 1 Thessalonians

Name of Writer

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

Name of Recipient

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Greeting

Grace to you and peace.

Thanksgiving

² We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly^[a] mentioning you in our prayers,
³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Body

I. ⁴For we know, brothers^[b] loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. ⁹For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

II. 2 (Continuing thought from 1:4-5) For you yourselves know, brothers,^[a] that our coming to you was not in vain. ²But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. ³For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, ⁴but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. ⁵For we never came with words of flattery,^[b] as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷But we were gentle^[c] among you, (Simile) like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. ⁸So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

III. (Continuing thought from 2:8) ⁹For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. ¹¹For you know how, like a father with his children, ¹²we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

IV. ¹³And we also thank God constantly^[d] for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men^[e] but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. ¹⁴For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews,^[f] ¹⁵who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind ¹⁶by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!^[g]

¹⁷But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, ¹⁸because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us. ¹⁹For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? ²⁰For you are our glory and joy.

V. 3 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, ²and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker^[a] in the gospel of Christ, to establish and

exhort you in your faith, ³ that no one be moved by these afflictions. **For** you yourselves know that we are destined for this. ⁴**For** when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. ⁵**For** this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, **for** fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you **and** our labor would be in vain.

⁶**But** now that Timothy has come to us from you, **and** has brought us the good news of your faith **and** love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— ⁷**for this reason**, brothers, ^[b] in all our distress **and** affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. ⁸**For** now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. ⁹**For** what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, **for** all the joy that we feel **for** your sake before our God, ¹⁰ as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

VI. ¹¹**Now** may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, ¹²**and** may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³**so that** he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

VII. ⁴**Finally**, then, brothers, ^[a] we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, **that** you do so more and more. ²**For** you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³**For** this is the will of God, your sanctification: ^[b] **that** you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴**that** each one of you know how to control his own body ^[c] in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶**that** no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, **because** the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷**For** God has not called us for impurity, **but** in holiness. ⁸**Therefore** whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Body Cont'd. - Instruction

⁹**Now** concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, **for** you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, ¹⁰**for** that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. **But** we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹**and** to aspire to live quietly, **and** to mind your own affairs, **and** to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹²**so that** you may walk properly before outsiders **and** be dependent on no one.

¹³**But** we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, **that** you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴**For** since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵**For** this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, ^[d] **that** we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶**For** the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, **and** with the sound of the trumpet of God. **And** the dead in Christ will

rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

⁵ Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, ^[a] you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children ^[b] of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Paraenesis

¹² We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, ^[c] encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵ See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

Benediction

²³ Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Final Greeting / Farewell

²⁵ Brothers, pray for us.

²⁶ Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

²⁷ I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

STEP 5: LITERARY ANALYSIS

5.1 STRUCTURE, SYNTAX, AND LOGIC OF ARGUMENT.

WHY DO THIS STEP?

Every author has a structure in mind when writing a narrative or letter. Note how the author prepares the hearer-reader for what follows (Ask yourself, “What leads into my text?” and “What leads out of this text?”). There is always some logical coherence and structure in the way a letter or story is told. Our job is to figure out this structure and determine how our passage functions to communicate a particular theological perspective.

5.1.1. Analyze the structure of your pericope. You may use a “sentence flow” or “sentence diagram” method (cf. Fee, 41-58). The idea is to clarify the flow of the author’s argument or story. Highlight (color code) repeated words or concepts, pay attention to syntactical relationships, look for chiasmic or any other types of organizing structures (see John 1:1-18 example above).

Use your own method for organizing and asking questions. Think logically and grammatically. Exegesis is about asking good questions. Questions about structure include:

- Adverbial questions answer:** When? Why? Under what conditions/circumstances? How? Where? For what purpose? Etc.
- Adjectival questions answer:** What kind of? Which? How many? Whose?
- Pay attention to coordinate and subordinate conjunctions.** Coordinate conjunctions—**and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet**--are button words that hook like things together (e.g. coordinate clauses, subjects, verbs, etc.). Subordinate conjunctions—*although, as, because, if, in order that, when, after, before*--are button words that hook unlike things together (e.g. a main clause followed by a subordinate clause).

Example: Luke 1:1-4

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account

ANSWERS WHY WRITE? Gives the reason for writing)

of the events

WHAT KIND OF ACCOUNT?

that have been fulfilled among us,

WHICH EVENTS?

² just as they were handed on to us

HOW RECEIVED? Gives manner/circumstances of reception.

by those

CIRCUMSTANCES/AGENCY

who were eyewitnesses and servants of the word

WHAT KIND OF AGENTS?
Gives credentials

from the beginning, WHEN?

I too decided . . . to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

MAIN, INDEPENDENT SENTENCE (Main Idea)

after investigating everything
carefully
from the very first,

WHEN?
HOW?
HOW LONG?

so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

WHY?

For you yourselves know, brothers,
that our coming to you was not in vain.

“For” links back to 4b-5a -
Know what?

But though we had already suffered and been
shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know,

Why was coming not in vain?

we had boldness in our God to declare to you
the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.

What were results despite
Previous suffering?

For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity
or any attempt to deceive,

Why did they have boldness?

but just as we have been approved by God to be
entrusted with the gospel,

so we speak, not to please man,

Why do they speak?

but to please God who
tests our hearts.

If not to please man, who?

For we never came with words of flattery, as you know,
nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness.

Refers back to vs. 3 – why
No error, impurity, or deceit?

Nor did we seek glory from people,
whether from you or from others,

Continuation of vs. 5b
Seek glory from who?

though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

Refers back to 5b – what
Could they have gained?

⁷**But** we were gentle among you,
like a nursing mother
taking care of her own children.

Contrast to vs. 5 – how did
did they come?

What is character of nursing mother?

⁸**So**, being affectionately desirous of you,

If not for gain, why?

we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God
but also our own selves,
because you had become very dear to us.

What were they ready to do?

Share what else?

Why ready to share?

5.1.2 Write a summary here of the information you can derive from your structure above. What lexical, syntactical or other structural indicators are important and why?

This periscope appears to link back to 1:4b-5a - that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

Main points Paul is making in this periscope:

- 1) vs. 2b - we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.
 - 2) vs. 8 - we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own selves
- Their coming was not in vain because the gospel was shared in power and the Holy Spirit.
 - Their boldness came despite having been “shamefully treated”.
 - Their appeal was not made in error, impurity, or deception.
 - They spoke to please God – not man
 - They did not speak Flattery.
 - They did not speak out of Greed.
 - They did not speak for Glory.
 - They did not want to issue demands (cause the Thessalonians heaviness, weight, burden, trouble).
 - Rather, they were affectionate and gentle, like a mother to her child.

- They shared not only the gospel, but their own selves (soul, self, inner life)

5.1.3 Set out briefly the logic and content of your text (How does the author unfold each step in his argument? At what point does he reach the main thought or idea?). Show the significance of your paragraph in the overall development of the argument/exhortation/story, etc? (Fee, 19-20).

WHY DO THIS STEP?

It is an unfortunate truth that most pastors and seminary students can describe the content of a biblical passage, but they have no clue as to the development of a biblical author's argument or position. This leads to misunderstandings and a proliferation of clichés that have no power to address the needs of the contemporary context. Do you know the strategy that drives the development of the argument in 1 Thessalonians or Romans? Can you articulate it clearly?

For example, it is one thing to describe the introduction of Jesus as a cosmic figure in John 1:1-18 who comes to earth to reveal God through his own enfleshment, it is quite another to understand how this introduction prepares us for what follows. Why is 1:1-18 followed by testimony ("This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask him, 'Who are you.?'") How does testimony function in this ancient Jewish culture? It must be important because it is embedded within the prologue alerting us to John's role as testifier to the light. What is the significance that the first public testimony of John is that "I-AM not the Christ" and that every use of "I-AM" afterwards is Jesus' own testimony to who he is? Testimony is scattered throughout the Gospel in strategic places where Jesus' identity is critical to the message. What we begin to suspect is that a scene of judgment is taking place in which the one being tried is not Jesus, but us.

Paul is stating the gospel message was shared in the power of the Holy Spirit, out of love for the Thessalonians. Their ministry went beyond sharing the message, to sharing their very souls.

To demonstrate this, Paul reminds them that they shared the gospel with boldness, despite having recently suffered for doing so (demonstrating the Spirit's involvement). The gospel message was shared in purity – not in error, impurity or deceit. They did not share the message to please men, which would likely distort the message (for example, using flattery), nor did they share the message for profit or their own glory. They did not even make "demands," which would have been their right as apostles, but rather lived in such a way as to not be a burden to the Thessalonians. Rather, the message was brought with gentleness, as a mother caring for her child. The message was brought with sincerity and love, bearing their souls to the Thessalonians.

5.2 RHETORIC. What “rhetorical features” (hyperbole, questions, commands, irony, parable, allegory, allusion, etc.) does your text display? How are they important for exegesis?

Hyperbole: exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.

Questions: sentences that draw the hearer-reader into an active role by requiring them to provide the

Information or answer (has the effect of making people commit to a position)

Commands: authoritative orders; forces one to inquire as to the legitimacy of the authority as well as

respond to the request

Irony: Expressing meaning by using language usually signaling the opposite of what one meant (often

Humorous)

Parable: Succinct, didactic story that illustrates one or more instructive lessons or principles

Allegory: literary devices/rhetorical devices that convey hidden meanings through symbolic figures,

actions, imagery, and/or events, which together create the moral, spiritual, or political meaning the author wishes to convey.

Allusion: an expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning it explicitly; an indirect

or passing reference (most often from the Hebrew Scriptures).

Paul uses one simile - like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.

5.3 GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

Students without the biblical languages must proceed with caution. Step 3 should give an early indication of where the grammar or meaning of individual words is dependent on the original language such as the use of grammatical structures (i.e. clauses, prepositional phrases, verb tenses, etc.) or the original meaning of words that are theologically significant (see Step 5.4 below).

Here you will need to depend on a good critical commentary as well as the Accordance software to discover the Greek/Hebrew behind the translations (the Biblical Hebrew or Biblical Greek Companion for Bible Software Users will help explain the terms used by these commentaries so do not be hesitant to consult these resources).

5.3.1 List any difficult or unusual grammatical features of your text addressed by the scholars (use several critical commentaries to compare their explanations) and explain their importance for understanding this passage.

Keener highlights Paul's use of "antithetical parallels" ("not...but") in chapter 2 – beginning with verse one where he uses it to contrast proper and improper lifestyles.¹⁰ Paul uses it again in verses 3-4 to assert pleasing God over pleasing people, and divine authorization and inspiration.¹¹ Although Keener does not highlight the antithetical parallels in verse 8, Paul again uses it to proclaim they shared not only the gospel, but their very souls.

5.4 LEXICOGRAPHY. (Note well Fee's warnings, pp.79-80. On this whole section consult closely Fee's Sect. II.4 and pay particular attention to 82-93).

5.4.1 Identify any words which are "theologically loaded," ambiguous, repeated or emphasized by the author.

In the Bible Knowledge Commentary, Constable notes that Paul uses the word "gospel" 5 times in 1 Thessalonians (1:5; 2:2,4,8; 3:2); 3 of the 5 are in this passage in chapter 2.¹² Gospel comes from the Greek word *euaggelion*, meaning 'good news, gospel'.

Verse 1 –

Verse 1 begins "You yourselves..." or "For you yourselves..." except in the NIV, which only has "you" not "yourselves" – this does not impact the meaning of the verse. The phrase "our coming to you" is rendered "visit" only in the NIV – no impact on meaning. All but the NIV end with "not in vain," which the NIV translates "not without results". The Greek word is *kenos* (2756) – empty, foolish, worthless, vacuity. Their visit was not worthless.

Verse 2 –

All but the NIV begin with the word "but" – Greek *alla* (0235) – but, rather, on the contrary. There is some variation in "had courage" (NRSV), "were bold" (NKJV), "had boldness" (ESV and NASB), and "with the help of" (NIV). The Greek word *hparrēsiazomai* (3955) means 'to speak with boldness'; and "in" is the Greek word *en* (1722) – in, with, by, to. They were "shamefully treated" (ESV), "shamefully mistreated" (NRSV), "spitefully treated" (NKJV), "treated outrageously" (NIV), "mistreated" (NASB). The Greek word *hubrizō* means – to boast, to insult. Finally, they had boldness to speak the gospel in the midst of "opposition" (NRSV,

¹⁰ Craig S. Keener, "1 Thessalonians," in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1993), 586.

¹¹ Keener, "1 Thessalonians," 586.

¹² Thomas L. Constable, "1 Thessalonians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, (USA: Victor Books, 1983), 694.

NIV, NASB) or “conflict” (NKJV, ESV). The Greek word used is *agōn* (0073) – gathering, contest – their message was contested.

Verse 3 –

Their appeal did not spring from “error” in all 4 versions except NRSV, which says “deceit”. The Greek here is *plane* (4106) – error. Each verse ends with “deceive” (ESV), “deceit” (NKJV, NASB), “trick” (NIV), “trickery” (NRSV) – the Greek word *dolos* (1388) – deceit, cunning. Unclear why NRSV would translate “error” as “deceit”, when the last word in the list is also “deceit”.

Verse 4 –

Minor variations in sentence wording exist. Verse 4 ends “God who tests our hearts” in all versions except NASB, which says “God who examines our hearts”. Greek word is *dokimazō* (1381) – to prove, approve, test.

Verse 5 –

There is variation in order of words used in verse 5. NRSV, ESV and NASB speak of “pretext of greed”; NIV says “a mask to cover up greed”; and the NKJV is most different saying “cloak of covetousness”. The Greek words used are *prophasis* (4392) – motive, false motive, excuse, pretext, and *pleonexia* (4124) – greediness, lust, advantage.

Verse 6 –

In verse 6, Paul states they did not seek “praise” (NRSV, NIV) or “glory” (NKJV, ESV, NASB). The Greek word *doxa* (1391) is used meaning opinion, glory. The NKJV and ESV speak of not having made demands. This phrase appears in the NRSV in verse 7, not verse 6. And the NIV and NASB speak of not asserting their authority. The Greek word *baros* (0922) is used, meaning heaviness, weight, burden, trouble, making ‘demands’ a better translation; they could have ‘been a burden’.

Verse 7 –

In verse 7, four versions say they were “gentle among you,” but the NIV translates “were like young children among you” – an interesting interpretation, given Paul then refers to themselves as a “nurse” (NRSV) or “nursing mother” (NKJV, NIV, ESV, NASB). The Greek word *trophos* (5162) means ‘nurse’.

Verse 8 –

Verse 8 has several minor variations. The opening phrase varies for each verse: “So deeply do we care for you” (NRSV); “So, affectionately longing for you” (NKJV); “so we cared for you” (NIV); “So, being affectionately desirous of you” (ESV); “Having so fond an affection for you” (NASB). Although the basic meaning of each variation is similar, the Greek word used is *homeiromai* (2655) – To yearn for. Each verse ends with the phrase “you had become very dear to us,” except the NIV which seems to place a variation of the phrase at the beginning of the sentence as “Because we loved you so much”. They “shared” (NRSV, NIV, ESV) or “imparted” (NKJV, NASB) the gospel – Greek *metadidōmi* (3330) – to impart, to share, distribute. They shared the gospel because they were “determined” (NRSV); “well pleased” (NKJV, NASB); “delighted” (NIV); “ready” (ESV). The Greek word *eudokeō* (2106) is used, meaning “to be

well pleased; to consent; to enjoy”. They shared not only the gospel, but also their own “selves” (NRSV, ESV) or “lives” (NKJV, NIV, NASB). This Greek term is *psuchē* (5590) – meaning ‘soul, self, inner life’.

5.4.2. Choose one or two of these words listed in 5.4.1 and look them up in a concordance to see where they are used elsewhere in your book and how context brings out different nuances of the meaning. Be reflective. For example, the term “life” in John’s Gospel appears in several contexts such as eschatological, with the adjective descriptor “eternal,” and in relation to Christ himself. There is no right or wrong.. just be thoughtful in your observations.

They shared not only the gospel, but also their own “selves” (NRSV, ESV) or “lives” (NKJV, NIV, NASB). This Greek term is *psuchē* (5590)– meaning ‘soul, self, inner life’.

Luke 9:56 - For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives [*psuchē*], but to save them. (This passage is not found in all versions - e.g. - does not appear in ESV)

Acts 15:26 - men who have risked their lives [*psuchē*] for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 27:10 - saying, “Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives [*psuchē*].”

1 John 3:16 - By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives [*psuchē*] for the brothers.

Revelation 12:11 - And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives [*psuchē*] even unto death.

Romans 13:1 - Let every person [*psuchē*] be subject to the governing authorities.

James 5:20 - let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul [*psuchē*] from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul [*psuchē*] and of spirit,

1 Peter 2:11 - Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul [*psuchē*].

5.4.3 Next, **look up the word in one of the Hebrew or Greek lexicons** provided in Accordance and **notice the ranges of meanings for this word. Which best fits the context?**

Given the context, I believe ‘soul’ would be the best translation for *psuchē* – it seems like Paul is saying something much more profound than that they simply shared their lives. Rather, in the purity of their message, the lack of greed, their desire not to overburden the Thessalonians – they are more than sharing a message – they are bearing their souls.

STEP 6. CULTURAL CONTEXT

6.1 List features of your text which you suspect might be illuminated or explained by a greater knowledge of Jewish or Greco Roman history and culture.

WHY DO THIS STEP? The gap between an ancient culture and the contemporary context is great. They shared common knowledge about religion, society, and cultural values that we know nothing about. By studying these background issues you avoid anachronism (assuming a society remote in time from us shares our culture or perspectives) and ethnocentrism (assuming the values of another society are the same as ours).

2:2 – “But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi”

What happened to them in Philippi?

4b-7a “..not to please man, but to please God For we never came with words of flattery....nor with a pretext for greed.... Nor did we seek glory from people.... But we were gentle...”

What were they contrasting their approach to? Was there a norm among ministers / philosophers to live this way? Or were they simply highlighting the purity of their ministry – that they had the Thessalonians best interests in mind?

6.2 Choose one of these ancient issues noted in 6.1 and, using the bibliography in Fee, Sec. II.5 (and any supplementary bibliography), **(a) explore the cultural background a little further** and **(b) explain how this study may aid in an understanding of the cultural milieu of the author.**

With regard to the objections Paul addresses in verses 4b-7a, Craig S. Keener asserts that, “Paul need not be responding to actual opponents in this section, as some earlier commentators

thought”.¹³ Rather, wandering philosophers were often criticized and attacked such that they developed traditional themes, regardless of whether or not they were defending themselves.¹⁴ Keener then elaborates at great length about Dio Chrysostom, a public speaker who lived a generation after Paul, and who accused wandering philosophers of “error, impurity, deceit (2:3), flattery (2:5), and love of honor (2:6) and money (2:5). He was known to criticize false philosophers, who were afraid of insulting treatment, declaring that true philosophers speak with boldness in the face of opposition (compare to Paul in 2:2).¹⁵

6.3 Evaluate the significance of this background data for the understanding of your passage.

Keener’s insight offers a peek into the world of public speaking in Paul’s day. It shows that Paul was not only interested in declaring the purity of their message and ministry, but also differentiating it from false teachers / philosophers. Dio Chrysostom additionally instructed that true philosophers be “gentle, like a nurse,” as Paul declares they were in 2:7.¹⁶ Paul further dissociates himself and his message from flattery, which philosophers often used to win people over and get more money. Paul’s concern, though, was neither money, nor the favor of the people, but the message of Christ.

STEP 7. CANONICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

7.1 How does your passage compare to other passages in Scripture which address similar issues? (Fee 31-32)

This letter was written after Paul’s visit to Thessalonica as described in Acts 17¹⁷ -

Acts 17: Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for

¹³ Craig S. Keener, “1 Thessalonians,” in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1993), 586.

¹⁴ Keener, *IVP Bible*, 586.

¹⁵ Keener, *IVP Bible*, 586.

¹⁶ Keener, *IVP Bible*, 586.

¹⁷ Keener, *IVP Bible*, 583.

three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.” ⁴ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. ⁵ But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. ⁶ When they did not find them, they *began* dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have upset the world have come here also; ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” ⁸ They stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things. ⁹ And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 - Paul similarly proclaims his message to the Corinthians was not out of skill in speaking, but in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1 Corinthians 9:11ff. – Paul points out that he had the right to earn a living from his ministry, but rather he earned his own way apart from the ministry, to maintain the purity of the gospel message.

Vs. 15 - But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting.

Paul speaks in Philippians 4:16-18 about their generosity in providing for Paul while he was in Thessalonica:

¹⁶ Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. ¹⁸ I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Paul shares his affection for his ‘audience’ in other passages, as well:

Philippians 1:8 - For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Galatians 4:19 - my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!

2 Corinthians 11:28 - And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Ephesians 1:16 - ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

Paul speaks of the necessity of love to make ministry effective:

1 Corinthians 13:1-2: If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

1 John 1:7 - But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another,

7.2 What does your passage contribute to the overall teaching of this subject in the Bible?
What specifically would be lost or how would the message of the Bible be less complete if your passage did not exist?

This passage offers a beautiful and intimate look at the heart of Paul's ministry. Although he is arguably one of the greatest human minds in history, and is certainly among the greatest theologians, this pericope offers a window into the tender heart from which he conducts his ministry. Although there are other passages in Scripture that teach love as our prime directive, this passage, particularly verse 8, offer us a rare personal glimpse of that directive in action.

7.3 What are the theological implications of your passage?

In the midst of an age of constant noise and information overload, it sometimes feels like the sole objective of evangelical Christianity is to "spread the gospel" and evangelize the world. It sometimes feels like we are engaged in a battle of worldviews. But as Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 13, without love we are just a "noisy gong or a clanging cymbal".

The greatest theological implication of this pericope is in fact pastoral in nature.

STEP 8. ACCUMULATE A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SECONDARY SOURCES AND READ WIDELY.

WHY DO THIS STEP LAST? Scholars and secondary sources are your conversation partners. Learn to ask questions of their perspective, argue with them, listen attentively to their point of view, and then state why you think your perspective is just as valid or more valid, much like you would do if having this conversation at Starbucks. To start with their positions without having investigated the issues yourself is the lazy way out of doing the hard work of exegesis . . . in fact, without doing your own investigation you cannot claim to have exegeted the passage to your congregation or to your peers.

8.1 Find at least 8 commentaries, books or journal articles which deal with your passage and read the contributions of other scholars. List the sources here using correct Turabian style). *DO NOT USE MATTHEW HENRY OR OTHER DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARIES!* *These may add some additional insight, but remember, they did not have access to the most recent manuscript or archeological discoveries nor did they live in the complexity of our modern context.*

Bibliography

Blaiklock, Edward M. "Thessalonica." in *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by Merrill Chapin Tenney and James Dixon Douglas, 1010. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987.

Bridges, Linda McKinnish. *1 & 2 Thessalonians*. Macon, Ga : Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2008. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost).

Constable, Thomas L. "1 Thessalonians." in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, 687-711. USA: Victor Books, 1983.

Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1993.

Osborne, Grant R. *1 and 2 Thessalonians Verse by Verse*. Ashland : Lexham Press, 2018. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost).

Sandmel, David Fox. "The First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians." in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, 419. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Strong, James. *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990.

Tenney, Merrill C. "Letters to the Thessalonians." in *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by Merrill Chapin Tenney and James Dixon Douglas, 1009. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987.

8.2 What are some of the most significant differences (presuppositional, theological, hermeneutical, etc.) between your approach and that of some authors you have read?

Among all of my sources, one of the most interesting was the perspective of Linda McKinnish Bridges. It was interesting to hear a woman's perspective on her perception of Paul limiting the role and opportunities of women. And it was both uplifting and encouraging to hear how her perspective changed having read 1 Thessalonians, and noted the tenderness and intimacy in Paul's tone.

It was also interesting that hidden in the word studies was the use of the Greek word *psuchē* – the best translation of which seems to be 'soul' – which highlights that Paul seems to be saying something much more profound than that they simply shared their lives. They are more than sharing a message – they are bearing their souls to those they love.

8.3 State a few places where significant differences between you and some scholar(s) demand that you deal with their views in your paper and show why they are wrong (see Fee, 33). *You need not write your full refutation here.*

In this particular pericope, there were no significant differences between my views and those of the scholars I read. Rather, there were enhancements and differing perspectives that expanded my own reading and perspective.

YOU ARE NOW READY TO WRITE/PRODUCE YOUR PROJECT (PAPER, SERMON, ETC.)!