

STEP 7. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

7.1 How does your passage compare to other passages in Scripture which address similar issues?

There are several passages that address similar issues and some in similar ways.

1 Thessalonians	Romans 12
12 - 13a respect leaders	3-8 Don't think more highly of yourself because of Spiritual gifts
13b peace among yourselves	18 peace with all mean
14 care for weak and unruly	(Romans 14:1 receive the weak)
15 Not evil for evil	17a adding to do good to all men
	Rom 12:17,19 1 Cor 4:12, 6:7, 1 Peter 3:9
16 rejoice always	12a be joyful in hope
17 pray unceasingly	12c continue in prayer
18 give thanks	Ephesians 5:20 always giving thanks to God the Father

Paul uses the word admonish and he is the only one who uses that word in the NT. Acts 20:31, Romans 15:14, Col 3:16

Also, I need further research regarding some discussion as to whether Paul had this young church organized to have much in the way of leadership and whether other Scripture such as I Timothy 5:17 is consistent. I Timothy would have been written much later so there seems to be some controversy created because of the later date and the maturity of the church and Paul's ministry.

In 1 Thess 5:14, Paul talks about the weak and a number of verses reference both the physical and spiritual side of the word - Romans 5:6, 14:1, 1 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 10, 9:22, 11:30

Paul uses the most comprehensive word for prayer - Romans 12:12, Ephesians 6:18, Col 4:2, Phil 14:6.

7.2 What would be lost or how would the message of the Bible be less complete if your passage did not exist?

What would be lost would be the sincere love and fellowship that developed so quickly between this young church and Paul. We would not be able to see the devotion on Paul's part to this church and his expression, through his teaching, of how much he yearned for them to grow in the Lord. We would never know how much he longed to see them but was kept from returning due to persecution. This is a beautiful glimpse of the early church and their struggles but also their victories. We would not know how well this young church was doing and we would not know their struggles which are much like ours today. We get to see more of who Paul was and his dedication to ensuring that the church would be grounded in the Word.

The question as to how the Bible would be less complete is an interesting one to ponder. We are the body of Christ, and we complete each other in Spirit. We were meant for fellowship and to work and grow together. The early Thessalonian church is a beautiful example of God's design for us. They were a shining example of the ministry that Jesus began with his disciples, and he is the one who commissioned them to go forward and share the Gospel.

7.3 What is the theological importance of your passage?

This passages in Thessalonians stresses the important of taking care of each other and the command to do so. This command does not favor the rich over the poor; the educated over the undereducated or lovely over the unlovely. It does stress the important of respecting their leadership and the work they do but overall, it challenged the church to treat all well and fairly including those that might not return that fair treatment. It also stressed the importance of prayer and being thankful in all circumstances.

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

8.1 Find a combination of at least 6 commentaries, books, or academic or pastoral journal articles which deal with your passage and read the contributions of other scholars. List the sources here using the correct Turabian style).

There should be no space between the citation and its matching internet address but for some reason my computer decided to be stubborn and put one there:)

Boring, M. Eugene. *I and II Thessalonians : A Commentary*. Vol. 1. Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.

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Brown, David, Fausset, Andrew Robert, Jamieson, Robert, Truth Be Told Ministry. *Fausset's Bible Dictionary : 4001 Definitions and 130k Cross-References*. Truth Be Told Ministry, 2017.

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Hendriksen, William. *New Testament Commentary Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus*. Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1955.

Holmes, Michael W. *The NIV Application Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1998.

Malherbe, Abraham J. *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York, Doubleday, 2000.

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Osborne, Grant R. *1 and 2 Thessalonians Verse by Verse. Osborne New Testament Commentaries*. Ashland, Lexham Press, 2018.

<https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.nyack.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1857024&site=ehost-live>.

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?

The article written in the journal *Neotestamentica* challenges the composition of Paul's audience. The consensus is that Paul was writing to pagans, proselytes or God-fearers and not Jews. The author challenges the definition of God-fearers to include those that believed in Israel's God but did not renounce idols. The author argues that Thess 1:9 could include God-fearers. God-fearers is a category defining gentiles as sympathetic to Judaism. He uses Luke to support the idea that Luke uses this category as a separate group. Some even argue that God-fearers is a Lukan invention. It was not uncommon for Romans to add another "god" instead of turning toward one God.

As to argument of the lack of OT references, God-fearers would not have had a background in the OT any more than pagans and so the author argues that the lack of scripture tells us little to nothing and adds that there are other letters that do not contain scripture.

The author also questions the historical reliability of Acts 17: 1-10a.

There is also some controversy as to whether Paul was addressing specific issues brought to his attention by Timothy after his visit to the church or whether Paul is just addressing general issues that he assumed needed to be addressed because of the immaturity of this young church.

8.3 State a few places where you will use other scholars' work to SUPPORT your conclusions, indicating some quotations from them worthy of citing in your paper. "*Be careful not to let them dictate what you conclude about the passage. Be critical of your sources and do not be afraid to disagree with commentators. As always, cite your sources so as not to plagiarize,*" (Duvall and Hayes, *Grasping God's Word*, p. 506).

"[Paul] seems to shape them to some extent in light of his knowledge of the situation in Thessalonica." – supporting the argument that some of Paul's teaching were not just general instructions but were born out of his knowledge of what was happening in the church. (Michael W. Holmes, *The NIV Application Commentary*, 177.)

[Paul] writes this way to lay a philopnetic foundation for the practical advice he would give in chapters 4 and 5. – (Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters of the Thessalonians*, 202.

8.4 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. *You need not write your full refutation here.*

I will use the point in the discussion under the question 8.2 to represent two significant differences. I have not decided who is right or wrong as to the composition of the church. I just came across this article a day ago so it is still an area I am exploring.

As to the question of whether Paul was addressing general issues as to specific issues within the church and brought to his attention by Timothy's visit, it is an issue of interest but it is not definitive of any issue on doctrine or does not affect the message.

8.5 Hypothesize what the passage of Scripture you chose to investigate means. Then write out a well-crafted preliminary thesis statement that either explains how you will interpret the significance of the subject matter or question under discussion, what to expect from the rest of the project/paper, and/or makes a claim that others might dispute. ***A thesis statement is an essential part of any graduate project/paper, so you need to identify enough resources to support the claims being made. A thesis is often revised once you have gathered enough supporting evidence to begin your Final Project/Paper. The more quality attention is given here, the better your final project will be.***

Sermons may not use this written thesis, but they should reflect the preparation that went into the sermon and a thesis statement (reflected in the Big Idea) is an important part.

The letter written by Paul to the church in Thessalonica is a love letter to a young church in need of general instruction on how to live a life honoring God and turning away from the Hellenistic influence. It also contains specific instruction on issues that may have arisen in the church as documented by Timothy upon his return to Paul after visiting the church.