

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

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First Thessalonians

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1 Thessalonians

1 *I,* Paul, *write this letter to you,* and Silas and Timothy *are with me*. *I send this letter* to *you,* the group of believers in the city of Thessalonica. God the Father has united you to himself and to the Lord Jesus the Messiah. *May God continue to be* kind to you and *make you* peaceful.

2 We pray for you persistently. *When we do,* we consistently thank God for all of you. 3 We thank our God and Father for what you do because you trust *in him*. *We thank him* for the way that you help people because you love *them*. *We thank him* for the way that you patiently endure because you confidently expect our Lord Jesus the Messiah *to come again*. 4 *We thank God because* we know that he chose you, fellow believers whom God loves. 5 *We know that God chose you,* because when we told you the good news, we did not just say words. Rather, the Holy Spirit also powerfully worked *through us*, and we were sure that the good news was true. In the same way, you remember how we acted to help you when we were with you. 6 As for you, you acted as we do and as the Lord *Jesus* did. Specifically, when you believed the good news, you suffered greatly, but the Holy Spirit caused you to rejoice. 7 Because *you acted in those ways*, all the believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia want to act as you do. 8 In fact, many people *who live* in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia have heard the message about the Lord *Jesus* because of you. Even more, people in very many places have heard about how you trust in God. As a result, we do not need to tell people anything *about what God has done for you*. 9 Indeed, those same people tell others about how well it went when we visited you. *They say that* you stopped caring about other gods *and began to focus on* God so that you could worship and obey him, the only real God. 10 Further, *they say that you focused on God* so that you could eagerly anticipate when God's Son *will come back* from *where he is in* heaven. God made Jesus alive again, and Jesus is the one who will save us *who believe in him* at the time when God will punish people *for their sins*.

2 Fellow believers, you surely remember that when we visited you, it was very productive. 2 As you remember, when we were in the city of Philippi, people hurt us and abused us. However, our God made us confident when we told you the good news from God, despite how hard it was *to do*. 3 *When* we encouraged *you to believe the good news, we did* not convince you to believe an incorrect message. *We did* not say or do unclean things. *We did* not deceive you. 4 Rather, we speak as people whom God has tested and approved to proclaim the good news. We are not *trying* to please people. Instead, *we are trying to please* God. He is the one who tests what we think and desire. 5 In fact, when we visited you, we did not flatter you or pretend not to want money. You remember *that this is true*, and God testifies *that it is true*. 6 *We did* not desire that people would honor us. *We did not desire this* from you or from anyone else. 7 Since the Messiah sent us to represent him, we could have required you to obey us and give us whatever we wanted. However, when we were with you, we acted as gentle as babies. *We were* like mothers who lovingly take care of their children. 8 Since we care for you in those ways, we delighted to share the good news from God with you. Even more, *we delighted to share* our own lives *with you*. *That is* because we started to love you *very much*. 9 Fellow believers, *I know that* you recall how hard we labored. We worked all day long so that we would not have to bother any of you *by asking for money*. *That was how we acted when* we told you the good news from God. 10 Both you and God can testify that we did what was good and right *when we were* with you who trust *in God*. 11 You remember that *we behaved* toward every one of you as a father *behaves toward* his own children. 12 *That means that we* were teaching you and urging you so that you would live the way that God wants *his people to live*. He is the one who invites you to participate in his kingdom and in how great he is.

13 Further, we consistently thank God that you accepted what you heard about God in our message. You did not consider it to be a merely human message. Rather, *you considered it to be* a message from God, which is what it really is. This message is changing you who trust *in God*. 14–15 Now *unbelieving* Jews not only killed the prophets *long ago*, but they also *recently* killed the Lord Jesus and forced us to leave *your city*. These unbelieving Jews also persecuted the believers *who live in the region of Judea*. In fact, fellow believers, you have become like these groups of believers in Judea whom God has united to Jesus the Messiah. *That is* because people from your own country persecute you, just as *the unbelieving Jews persecuted the believers in Judea*. These *unbelieving* Jews do not please God, and they act against most people. 16 They try to stop us from telling *the good news* to non-Jews, *which we do* so that God saves non-Jews. So, *these unbelieving Jews* consistently continue to sin. However, God will completely punish them!

17 In contrast, fellow believers, we very eagerly desired to be with you in person, even though we had to leave you for a little while. Although we were physically absent, we always thought and cared about you. 18 Indeed, we wanted to visit you. Specifically, I myself, Paul, *tried to visit* several times. However, *each time,* Satan stopped us *from visiting*. 19 *We wanted to visit you* because it is you who enable us to hope and to rejoice and to say great things about you, who honor us. *We know that this will be true* when our Lord Jesus examines everyone after he returns to this world. 20 Indeed, you honor us and make us rejoice!

3 So then, because we *felt like we* could not possibly wait any longer, we decided that just Silas and I should stay behind in the city of Athens. 2 Then, Silas and I had Timothy visit you. *He is* our fellow believer and serves God by *proclaiming* the good news about the Messiah. *We had him visit you* so that he could support and encourage you as you trust *in God*. 3 That way, when people hurt *you*, you do not become unsure *as you trust in God*. In fact, you are well aware that *God* already decided that people would hurt us *believers*. 4 *You are well aware of that* because, while we *apostles* were visiting you, we warned you ahead of time that others were about to hurt us *believers*. You are well aware that this is exactly what occurred. 5 Because *others have hurt us believers*, and because I *felt like I* could not possibly wait any longer, I had *Timothy* visit you. *I wanted* to learn if you were still trusting *in God*. *I was concerned that* the devil might have *succeeded in* tempting you *to stop trusting in God*. *If that*

were true, how hard we had worked among you would have accomplished nothing!

6 However, Timothy recently returned to Silas and me after visiting you. He gave us good news about how much you trust *God* and love *each other*. *He told us* that whenever you think about us, it makes you happy. *He also told us that* you desire to be with us, just as we *desire to be with* you. 7 Fellow believers, because of what *Timothy told us*, although people were persecuting and hurting us often, God used how you continue to trust *in him* to encourage us that you *are doing well*. 8 Indeed, since you continue *to trust* in the Lord *Jesus*, we feel much better now! 9 In fact, we cannot thank God enough for you! We are extremely happy about you *whenever we pray* to our God. 10 All day long we urgently ask *God* to allow us to visit you and help you increase how much you trust *in God*.

11 *We pray that* God our Father and our Lord Jesus will enable us to visit you *again*! 12 *We pray that* the Lord *Jesus* will cause you always to love each other and all people more and more. That is how we love you! 13 *We pray those things* so that God will make you spiritually strong. *That way,* God our Father will consider you to be faultlessly pure. *He will do that* when our Lord Jesus returns to this world, *bringing* with him everyone who belongs to him. May it be so!

4 So then, fellow believers, *here is* the rest *of what I want to write to you*. *When we visited you,* we taught you how you should behave in a way that honors God, and that is how you are behaving! Now we urge you, because God has united you to the Lord Jesus, to continue to behave in this way more and more. 2 You remember what we commanded you *to do as we spoke* for the Lord Jesus.

3 For example, God desires that you act in pure ways. That means that you should not have improper sex. 4 *That also means that* you all should learn to control how you desire to have sex. *That way,* you will be acting purely and honoring *God*. 5 *You should* not have any improper sex that you greatly desire. That is what non-Jews who do not trust in God do. 6 *You should do what God desires* concerning having sex so that you will not sin by mistreating a fellow believer. *You should avoid sinning in that way* because the Lord *Jesus* will punish *all people who have* any kind of improper sex. We already declared that to you *when we were with you*. 7 Indeed, God chose us so that we would belong to him. *He did* not *choose us* so that we would do impure things. 8 So then, anyone who disobeys *what we have commanded you* is not *simply* disobeying a human. Rather, *that person is disobeying* God. He is the one who sends the Holy Spirit to you.

9 We do not have to tell you anything about how to care for fellow believers. *That is* because God instructed you so that you care for each other. 10 *That is* also because you *already* care for all the fellow believers throughout Macedonia *province*. Fellow believers, we exhort you *to care for fellow believers* even more. 11 *We* also *exhort you* to try very earnestly to live peacefully, to focus on your own tasks, and to earn what you need to live. In fact, *that is* what we told you to do *when we were with you*. 12 *We urge you to do these things,* so that you can set a good example toward those who do not believe in the Messiah *by how modestly you live.* Then you would not have to depend *on others* to provide what you need *to live*.

13 Also, *our* fellow believers in the Messiah, we want you to be aware about *what will happen to* believers in the Messiah who are dead. You should not be like the rest of humanity, which does not believe in the Messiah. They are deeply sad because they do not confidently expect that people will resurrect after death. 14 Certainly, we *apostles* are convinced that Jesus died and resurrected. This is why we also are convinced that God will *resurrect* the dead people who are united to Jesus. Then God will send them back with Jesus *when he returns to earth again*. 15 In fact, what we *apostles* are now telling you is a message from the Lord *Jesus himself*. When the Lord *Jesus* comes again*, all believers in the Messiah will greet him*. First, those *believers in the Messiah* who have *already* died will certainly greet him, and then we *believers in the Messiah* who are still alive. 16 *This is how* the Lord *Jesus* will come down from heaven: the Lord *Jesus* himself will personally give the command *for all to resurrect*. The chief angel will shout. God's trumpet will blast. Then *all* the dead who are united to the Messiah will be the first to resurrect *from the earth*. 17 After that, God will snatch up all of us believers in the Messiah who are still alive on earth so that we can meet the Lord *Jesus* in the air. Both groups of believers in the Messiah will meet together on the clouds. This is how we will remain together with the Lord *Jesus* forever! 18 As a result, you must encourage each other with this message!

5 *Now I want you to be aware of the timing of our Lord's return to earth* Our fellow believers in the Messiah, we do not *really* need to write *anything* to you about the specific time *of our Lord's return*. 2 This is because you yourselves already know accurately about the time when the Lord *Jesus* will come back. You also know that he will come *unexpectedly*, like when a robber comes at night. 3 *The Lord Jesus* will come at a time when people are saying, "*We are* safe and secure!" Then, suddenly, God will overwhelm and destroy them! It will be similar to when a pregnant woman cannot escape being overwhelmed by labor pains. In the same way, those people can never escape *when God destroys*! 4 However, *our* fellow believers in the Messiah, you are not people who are unaware of what will happen, like when people are in the darkness. This is why, when the Lord Jesus returns to earth to punish the people who do not belong to him, he will not surprise you as if he were a thief. 5 *Since* you are all God's children, *you should live ready for Jesus to return to earth*, like people who are in the light or awake during day are aware of what is happening. We are not *Satan's children,* who live unaware of what will happen, like people at night or in the darkness *who cannot perceive as well*. 6 So, this is why, *as God's children, we must live ready for what will happen. We must* not live unaware of what will happen like the rest of humanity, who are just like people who are sleeping. Instead, we must stay alert and remain attentive, *expecting Jesus to return to earth*. 7 It is well known that when people are unaware of what will happen, it is *usually* at night, when they are sleeping. And when people get drunk, they are not ready for what will happen. They *usually* get drunk at night, *when they cannot perceive things as well*. 8 But *we who are ready for the Lord Jesus to return to earth do not live unaware of what will happen like these people. Since* we are ready, we must remain attentive. We must fully arm ourselves *like soldiers*. Faithful love *towards God should cover our chests* like a breastplate. Being confident *that God* will save us *should fully protect our heads* like a helmet.

9 Since *we are his people,* God did not destine that he would punish us *for our sins*. Instead, he destined that our Lord, Jesus the Messiah, would preserve and save us. 10 Jesus died

in our place so that we would live *forever* with him. *This is true,* whether we are alive or dead *when he returns to earth*. 11 Since this is true, continue to habitually encourage and support each and every one *of your fellow believers in the Messiah*!

12 Finally, *our* fellow believers in the Messiah, we request that you give recognition to your spiritual leaders who work hard among you, in the same way you would give recognition to the Lord *Jesus*. You should also give them recognition because they continually warn and instruct you *about living like believers in the Messiah should*. 13 Because *of how hard* they work *for you,* we also request *that* you abundantly love your spiritual leaders by being considerate of them. *We also urge* that you keep living peacefully with each other.

14 *Our* fellow believers in the Messiah, we now urge that you warn and instruct those who live inappropriately. We *also* urge that you cheer up those who are discouraged. We *also* urge that you support those who are weak. We *also* urge that you live patiently with every one *of your fellow believers in the Messiah*. 15 If someone treats you badly, make sure that you do not treat them badly in return. Instead, whenever *you can,* actively look for ways to kindly treat every *fellow believer in the Messiah*.

16 Be joyful all the time! 17 Constantly pray! 18 Keep giving thanks to God in every situation! Indeed, God desires for all of you who are united to Jesus the Messiah to do all these things.

19 Do not *try to stop* the *Holy* Spirit *from working among you. That would be like someone trying to* extinguish *a fire*! 20 *In other words,* do not scorn prophecies *that the Holy Spirit gives to other believers in the Messiah*! 21 *Instead,* keep evaluating all *of the prophecies and* retain *only* those that prove to be excellent. 22 Refrain from any thing that appears to be wicked!

23 In summary, we pray that God will personally make you live like people who completely belong to him. God is the one who gives his people peace. We also pray that God will preserve you completely innocent for the time when our Lord Jesus the Messiah arrives on earth again. 24 The faithful God *continually* summons all of you *to live like those who completely belong to him. So, you can be certain that* he will also do *whatever is necessary for you to be able to live like those who completely belong to him*.

25 *Our* fellow believers in the Messiah, we also ask that you keep praying for me, for Silas, and for Timothy! 26 When you meet together *for worship*, affectionately greet each of your fellow believers in the Messiah in a way that is appropriate for those who belong to God. 27 I want you to swear an oath to the Lord *Jesus*, that you will read this letter to all the believers in the Messiah *among you*! 28 May our Lord Jesus the Messiah *continue to* act kindly toward all of you!