2 Thessalonians
HELPFUL STUDY TOOLS

ARTHUR, KAY
How to Study Your Bible Precept Upon Precept

Greek Word Study Tools

Commentaries on 2 Thessalonians
(See commentary list below.)

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

BAXTER, J. SIDLOW
Explore the Book

MORRIS, LEON
Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 and 2 Thessalonians

THOMAS, ROBERT L.; EARLE, RALPH; HEIBERT, D. EDMOND
The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: 1, 2 Thessalonians; 1, 2 Timothy; Titus
Lesson One
Overview

This Lesson Incorporates
Observation Worksheets on 2 Thessalonians, located in the Appendix
Cross-references

Time is short. How wise you are, Beloved, to choose to study God’s Word now.

Day One

Every book of the Bible is a revelation from God given at a specific time to a particular person for a divine purpose. Whether or not the author knew he was being supernaturally inspired by God Almighty to record God’s mind, heart, wisdom, and instruction in what would be called the Holy Bible, we really do not know. However, we do know we have a compilation of sixty-six different books, all inspired by the Spirit of God and without error, written over a period of 1600 years by approximately forty men. This knowledge is enough. However, to plumb the depths of God’s Book is the task of a lifetime.

This study will help you to move forward in your God-appointed task so that when your Lord appears, you will be found a workman approved unto God. If you are a child of God, you have the Holy Spirit, your resident teacher. He will lead you and guide you into all truth, so make prayer an integral part of your study.

1. If you have never studied a Precept Upon Precept course before, read the chapters entitled “The Rule of Context — Context Rules!” and “Getting the Big Picture” in How to Study Your Bible Precept Upon Precept.

The purpose of this first lesson is to discover the context of the book of 2 Thessalonians. This is the most important lesson you will do because it lays the foundation for all the other lessons. Since context always rules in interpretation and Scripture must always be interpreted in light of its context, the first step in your study of any book of the Bible is to begin with the Overview, the view of the entire book, to discover the context.
The process for discovering the context is to begin by looking for the obvious things that are mentioned in a particular book of the Bible. As we teach in our nationwide Institute of Training, there are three things that are always obvious, easy to see: people, places, and events.

If you will begin by observing the obvious, then the things within a book that are not easy to see or understand will become clearer as your study stays focused on the obvious. Understanding the context will help you in your interpretation of the unclear, obscure, difficult to understand parts of any book.

2. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 17, then write out what type of literature this is and who the author of this book is.

3. Since 2 Thessalonians is a letter, the place to begin your study is with the author because he is the first person mentioned in this book. Therefore, the first thing you want to do is identify what the book tells you about the author. Then as you evaluate these facts, the context of 2 Thessalonians will begin to unfold.

To do this, read through 2 Thessalonians and mark with a specific color or colored symbol each mention of the author’s name along with the pronouns, such as “I,” “my,” “we,” and “us,” that refer specifically to him.

Use the Observation Worksheets, located in the Appendix, for every assignment. These Observation Worksheets are the text of 2 Thessalonians from the New American Standard Bible printed double-spaced and are just what they say: work-sheets. We encourage you to do your work on them, and at a later date you might want to transfer some of your study notes to your Bible.

4. Before you begin this assignment, read all of the directions.

a. Using your marked Observation Worksheets, read all three chapters of 2 Thessalonians again. As you read, look carefully at every place you marked the author and see if it answers one of the following 5 Ws and an H (who,
what, when, where, why, how) kinds of questions that uniquely describe the author.

b. If one of the questions is answered, then using the same color you used to mark the references to the author, write the answer in the appropriate chapter column on the “People in 2 Thessalonians” chart, located on page 15. Or if you don’t have a pen in that color, simply highlight what you wrote in the same color you used on your Observation Worksheet.

**Who** is the author?

**What** does he say about himself?

**What** are his circumstances?

**What** is his relationship to the recipients? **How** does he feel about them?

**When** in his life is he writing?

The following is an example of how to list the answers on the chart:

**PEOPLE IN 2 THESALONIANS**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Chapter 2</th>
<th>Chapter 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>1:1 Paul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:3 gives thanks to God for them</td>
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<td>1:4 Speaks proudly of them</td>
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As shown in the illustration, be brief in your answers. Use words from the text and record the verse that your answer came from. By the way, if you will train yourself to use words right out of the Bible, you will find that you are putting into your mind and heart the very Word(s) of God which are spirit, life, and truth, that which sets you apart, sanctifies you.

As you go through 2 Thessalonians, you will notice that some questions will be answered in more than one place in the text and some verses may answer more
than one of the questions. On the other hand, some of the references you marked in the first assignment may not answer the questions. If they don’t answer any of the 5 Ws and an H questions, don’t record them on the chart.

5. Evaluate the answers you listed on your “People in 2 Thessalonians” chart. On the “2 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart, located on page 17, note what these facts tell you about the times in which this book was written. These facts give you the historical setting of 2 Thessalonians. The historical setting is a description of the times in which the letter was written.

As you continue to observe 2 Thessalonians, you will complete this At a Glance chart. By the end of this week you will have this chart all filled out and with it you’ll have not only a visual tool that helps you see the book of 2 Thessalonians at a glance, but you’ll have a good grasp of the context of 2 Thessalonians. You will be amazed and thrilled by what you are going to see on your own.

6. Again evaluate the facts you listed on your “People in 2 Thessalonians” chart and see if you can answer the following questions. (It may be too early in your study for you to see the answers to some of these questions.)

a. Why do you think Paul wrote this letter?

b. Do you see any words (including their synonyms) which are repeated in each individual chapter? A synonym is a word that has the same meaning as another word within a particular context.

c. What seems to be Paul’s central message to the Thessalonians?
7. In your observations of Paul today, what have you learned about Paul that you could personally model in your own walk with the Lord?

Today as we continue to look at 2 Thessalonians as a whole, our study will continue to focus on the people mentioned in the book. As we said before but it bears repeating, when looking for the obvious, people are easy to see.

1. Read all three chapters of 2 Thessalonians and mark on your Observation Worksheets every mention of the recipients. Use a different color from what you used to mark the author. Also be sure to mark all the pronouns for the recipients, such as “you,” “your,” “who,” and any synonyms, like “brethren” and “beloved.”

2. Read 2 Thessalonians again.

   a. Now write in the appropriate column on the “People in 2 Thessalonians” chart the answers to the following 5 **Ws and an H** kinds of questions that uniquely describe the recipients:

   - **Who** are the recipients?
   - **How** are they described?
   - **What** are their circumstances?
   - **What** event happened that caused Paul to be concerned about them?
   - **What** is their relationship to Paul? Have they ever seen him, been with him, or heard from him before this letter?

   b. Follow the same guidelines you used when you did this process for the author. Use the same color you used to mark the recipients on your Observation Worksheets and use words directly from the text.
Look for just the **obvious** facts that uniquely describe the recipients.

The following is an example of how to record the facts on the chart:

### PEOPLE IN 2 THESALONIANS

<table>
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<td>1:3 gives thanks to God for them</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:4 Speaks proudly of them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:1 Church of the Thessalonians</td>
<td>1:3 Brethren</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:3 Faith is enlarged, love grows greater</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:4 Have perseverance and faith in the midst of enduring persecutions and afflictions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Evaluate your chart and answer the following questions:

a. Did you see anything about the Thessalonians that would help you discern the historical setting of 2 Thessalonians? If so, add this to your “2 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart under the heading “Historical Setting.”

When you marked the text and listed the answers to the **5 Ws and an H** kinds of questions about the author and the recipients, you discovered certain facts about the historical setting of 2 Thessalonians. Do you realize what has just happened? So many times people think that the **only** way to understand the historical setting of a book is to read commentaries about the Bible, but they aren’t aware that careful observation of the text can reveal this to you. What a blessing this is for people in other countries and language groups who do not have commentaries in their language or easy access to them if they do exist.

b. What words or topics does the author emphasize in each chapter?
4. Can you see from the text **when** Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians? Before or after what? Read 2 Thessalonians 2:5, 15 for clues.

5. Can you tell from the text what happened that might have prompted Paul to write this letter? If so, note your answer below.

6. In light of this event, why do you think Paul ended this letter the way he did (2 Thessalonians 3:17)? (You might want to check 1 Corinthians 16:21; Galatians 6:11; Colossians 4:18.)

7. Why do you think Paul wrote this letter? Or to put it another way, what was the author’s purpose for writing 2 Thessalonians? Record this information under “Purpose” on the “2 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart.

**DAY THREE**

1. As you do this assignment, read through all the instructions before you begin.

   In 2 Thessalonians Paul communicated with the Thessalonians in three primary ways. Paul exhorted the Thessalonians, he addressed their problems, and he gave them instructions. Therefore, today read your Observation Worksheets on 2 Thessalonians and do the following:
a. Using a different color or a colored symbol, identify and mark the exhortations (encouragements) that Paul gives the Thessalonians. Then using the same color-code, list these exhortations on the “Exhortations, Problems, Instructions” chart, located on page 16. As you mark and list each exhortation, think about the context of this letter and ask yourself why each exhortation is given, what is its purpose.

b. Using another color or colored symbol, identify and mark the instructions (commands) Paul gives the Thessalonians. Then using the same color, list these instructions on the “Exhortations, Problems, Instructions” chart. Again think about the context as you list each instruction and think about why that particular instruction is given.

c. Also identify and mark, using still another color or colored symbol, any problems the author addresses. Using that same color, list these on the “Exhortations, Problems, Instructions” chart. As you list the problems chapter by chapter, think about how Paul’s exhortations and instructions relate to these problems.

The following is an example of how to list these things on the chart.

Since this book is not printed in color, we have distinguished between the categories as follows:

Exhortations = regular type, no box
Problems = boxed in type
Instructions = underlined type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhortations, Problems, Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:3 Thanks God for their faith and love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:4 Speaks proudly of their perseverance and faith in the midst of persecutions and afflictions which you endure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:2 Request regarding coming of Lord not be shaken or disturbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:1 Pray for us</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Now, take time to review and evaluate what you have listed on the “Exhortations, Problems, Instructions” chart. As you do, look for any key words (important descriptive words) and their synonyms which are repeated several times in the book. Mark these key words and their synonyms in distinctive ways or colors on this chart. They will help you discover the topics that the author addresses.

3. Evaluate the chart again and list below the topics that are addressed in 2 Thessalonians. Be sure to record the chapter and verse location of each topic.

4. Review your “Exhortations, Problems, Instructions” chart, then identify the following and record your insights on your “2 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart:

   a. Paul’s purpose for writing 2 Thessalonians

   b. The summary statement of Paul’s main message to the Thessalonians regarding the topics (subjects) covered in this book. Record this in the space provided for the book theme. As you identify the theme, be sure to notice how many times Paul refers to things that he had taught them before.

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Second Thessalonians is divided into three chapters. These chapter divisions are not divinely inspired; rather, they are man-made divisions, as are the verse divisions. While the chapters, and sometimes the verses, are not always divided in the best way, still they serve to help us identify where specific truths are located by chapter and verse.

Therefore, we are going to honor these chapter divisions as we identify the theme for each chapter that best summarizes the chapter and supports the theme of the book.
1. Read only chapter 1 looking for the theme (main topic) of that chapter.
   
   a. As you consider the theme, refer back to your “Exhortations, Problems, Instructions” chart. Evaluate those facts listed in the column for chapter 1.

   b. Which topic is emphasized in chapter 1? How could you summarize what Paul is saying to them in this chapter and also relate to the theme and purpose of 2 Thessalonians?

   c. When you have determined the theme, write it in the column for chapter 1 on your “2 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart.

2. Following the same process, read chapter 2 and chapter 3, one at a time, and identify the theme (main topic) of each chapter. Then write each in the appropriate column on your “2 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart.

Fill in any other information necessary to complete your “2 Thessalonians at a Glance” chart.

Did any particular thing you read in 2 Thessalonians speak to your heart in a special way this week? Record it below. Make sure you note why or how it spoke to you.

_Have you ever been shaken or disturbed when you have heard varied teachings about events that are still to come? Or do these not disturb you because you know and understand the Word of God? Such knowledge puts a firmness in your stance when you hold fast to truth, doesn’t it? Second Thessalonians is a book that is going to cement you in truth and keep you from being shaken or disturbed. How the church of Jesus Christ needs to take heed to the message it contains!_
Because 2 Thessalonians is second — not first — it’s obvious this isn’t the first time Paul has written to these people. To help you gain a better insight into the recipients and possibly confirm what you saw as the theme and the purpose of 2 Thessalonians, compare the following cross-references and see what you can glean about the Thessalonians, their relationship to Paul, their circumstances, and the mutual topics covered in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Record your insights next to each reference.

**The Thessalonians**

2 Thessalonians 1:3

1 Thessalonians 1:3
1 Thessalonians 1:8

**Paul’s Relationship to the Thessalonians**

2 Thessalonians 1:10

1 Thessalonians 2:13
Suffering

2 Thessalonians 1:7

1 Thessalonians 2:2
1 Thessalonians 3:4

The Day of the Lord

2 Thessalonians 2:1–5

1 Thessalonians 5:1–11
A Disciplined Life, Work

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

1 Thessalonians 2:9
1 Thessalonians 4:10b-12
1 Thessalonians 5:12-14

Well, Beloved, you are on your way, and we rejoice over you. We have only five more weeks to go, and what a great and enlightening five weeks it will be. Just remember that whenever you seek to study the Word of God, the enemy is there with all his subtle devices to keep you from putting on your armor and sharpening your one and only offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. So determine in your heart that you are going to finish this study and do it as to the Lord. You won’t be sorry.
# People in 2 Thessalonians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>2 Thessalonians Lesson 1, Overview</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# 2 Thessalonians at a Glance

## Book Theme:

## Author:

| 1 |

## Key Words:

| 2 |

## Purpose:

| 3 |

## Chapter Theme:

## Historical Setting: