

## Faith Has An Enemy

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### 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-20

#### This Week's Core

##### Competency:

**Authority of the Bible-** I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

#### Using This Study

##### ① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

##### ② EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

##### ③ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

#### The Power of an Example

On the morning of December 7, 1941, the Imperial Navy of Japan launched a surprise military attack against the US Naval Base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Four US Naval battleships were sunk and four others were damaged. 188 U.S. aircraft were destroyed. 2,402 men were killed and 1,282 wounded. Japanese losses were light: 29 aircraft and five small submarines were lost. 65 Japanese servicemen were either killed or wounded.

The attack came as a profound shock to the American people and led directly to the American entry into World War II. The following day, December 8, the United States declared war on Japan. Domestic support for isolationism, which had been strong, disappeared. Clandestine support of Britain was replaced by active alliance.

In light of the Japanese attack, it would have been unthinkable not to retaliate. What ignited the American people and propelled them toward swift and decisive retribution? Simply this: America clearly saw an enemy willing to kill Americans and destroy all that we hold dear. Somehow, the attack on Pearl Harbor seemed particularly treacherous because Japan hit us on our home turf.

The Bible tells us that, as Christians, we are engaged in a spiritual battle (2 Corinthians 10:3-4). Our enemy, Satan, is real. His agenda is to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). How many of us conduct ourselves as if we have an enemy that is seeking to devour us (1 Peter 5:8)? If the devil plotted, through evil men, to destroy Jesus on the cross, we can be sure that he will not hesitate to oppose us.

#### This Week

This week, as you study 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20, you will see that faith has an adversary, the devil. Will you allow opposition, problems, hardships, and difficulties to keep you discouraged and ineffective? Or, will you engage in the struggle, persevere in spite of opposition, and put on the Armor of God so that He can use you to accomplish His purposes?

## ① EXAMINE His Word

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What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the passage.

### 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

13 This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the message of God, which also works effectively in you believers.

14 For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, since you have also suffered the same things from people of your own country, just as they did from the Jews

15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and persecuted us; they displease God and are hostile to everyone,

16 hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. As a result, they are always completing the number of their sins, and wrath has overtaken them at last.

17 But as for us, brothers, after we were forced to leave you for a short time (in person, not in heart), we greatly desired and made every effort to return and see you face to face.

18 So we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.

19 For who is our hope or joy or crown of boasting in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Is it not you?

20 For you are our glory and joy!

## ② EXPLORE His Word

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What does God MEAN?

1. Paul refers to several forms of opposition suffered by the Thessalonians. Who persecuted the Thessalonians and why?
2. According to John 15:18-21 and John 16:1-4, why do believers face persecution?
3. List the effects that opposition, hardship, trials, and persecution can have on a believer.

Positive	Negative

4. Do you think that all opposition, hardship, trials, and persecution that a believer suffers originate from Satan?
5. Is the opposition that Paul describes in 1 Thessalonians 2:18 different from the type of persecution the Thessalonians experience? If yes, how?
6. Considering that Paul, the missionary, was obeying God's very definite call (Acts 9:15-16), why would God allow Paul to face opposition to the very call that he ordained (2 Corinthians 1:8-11)?
7. What comfort, what consolation, and what strength can the believer experience amidst difficulty?
  - a) Acts 9:4-6
  - b) Matthew 5:11-12
  - c) 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
  - d) John 16:33
  - e) Matthew 10:17-20
  - f) Matthew 10:28-31
8. Read Ephesians 6:10-18. How does Paul describe our enemy?
9. Describe each piece of God's armor, how to put it on, and what makes it useful.
10. What is Paul's prescription for prayer?

## ③ EMBRACE His Word

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Why does this MATTER to me?

11. How do you allow problems, difficulties, criticisms, opposition to get in the way of your calling to love, serve, or minister to others?
  
12. How well are you armed? Describe one thing that you plan to “put on” so that you can “stand against the devil’s schemes”(NIV).
  
13. How is your prayer life? Are you involved in praying for others who are going through difficult times? What could you change to improve your prayer life?

### **Summarize your thoughts on the passage:**

Write about what God wants you to KNOW...

Write about how God wants you to FEEL...

Write about what God wants you to DO...

# 30 CORE Competencies

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## 10 Core Beliefs

**Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Salvation by Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

**Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

**Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

**Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

**Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

**Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

**Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 Core Practices

**Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

**Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

**Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

**Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

**Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

**Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

**Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Money** *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 Core Virtues

**Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

**Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

**Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

**Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

**Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

**Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

**Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

**Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ