

In The Meantime – Week 1

Faith That Works: Living a Life Worth Imitating

1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

October 5, 2025

I. Introduction to 1 Thessalonians (v.1)

- Authors: Paul, Silvanus (Silas), Timothy.
- Greeting: “Grace and Peace” → Gospel-centered identity.
 - Grace = God’s unmerited favor through Christ’s sacrifice.
 - Peace = reconciliation with God through Christ’s righteousness.
- Theme: “*How now shall we live... in the meantime?*”
 - We wait for Jesus’ return, but waiting = active hope, not passive idleness.
 - A faith that permeates every corner of life.

II. Marks of a Life Worth Imitating (vv.2–5)

- **Work produced by faith**
- **Labor prompted by love**
- **Endurance inspired by hope**

1. Know the Gospel Intimately (v.5a)

- Paul calls it “our gospel”—ownership, identity, transformation.
- Galatians 2:20 → “Christ lives in me.”
- Do we know the Gospel intimately?

2. Live the Gospel Incarnationally (v.5b)

- “The gospel came to you... with power and conviction.”
- Jesus became flesh—disciples must also “move into the neighborhood.”
- Community + presence → where the Spirit works powerfully.

- Are we living the Gospel incarnationally?

3. Share the Gospel Intentionally (v.5c)

- “You know how we lived among you for your sake.”
- True disciples live *for the sake of others*, not themselves.
- This is Countercultural: the world lives self-centered; disciples live others-centered.
- Will we live intentionally for the sake of others?

III. The Fruit of a Life Worth Imitating (vv.6–10)

- **Imitators → Examples → Witnesses.**
1. They became **imitators of Paul & the Lord** (v.6).
 - Received the word with joy, even in affliction.
 2. Their lives became **examples** to believers (v.7).
 3. Their faith **sounded forth** everywhere (v.8–9).
 - A reputation that traveled further than their words.
 4. They lived with **eternal perspective** (v.10).
 - Waiting on Jesus, the risen Son, who rescues from wrath.

IV. How Do We Live a Life Worth Imitating?

1. **Discipleship is taught and caught** (v.6).
 - Who are you imitating? Who is imitating you?
2. **Discipleship comes to life in community** (v.7).
 - Your story encourages others. Are you sharing it?
3. **Discipleship overflows into witness** (v.8–9).
 - Faith that is lived naturally points to Christ.
4. **Discipleship has an eternal perspective** (v.10).
 - Keep eyes on Christ’s return → reshapes daily living.

LIFEgroup Discussion Questions

1. Who was a “Ron” in your life—someone who shaped your faith, work ethic, or character? How did their example rub off on you? Who might be imitating *your* life right now, whether you realize it or not?
2. Paul called it “our gospel” (v.5). What does it mean for the Gospel to become *yours*—something you own and live out daily? How do you move from simply “knowing about” the Gospel to living it deeply and personally?
3. In what ways can we “move into the neighborhood” like Jesus (John 1:14) and live the Gospel among people who don’t know Him yet? What practical step can you take this week to be more present in your community or with your neighbors?
4. Paul says, “we lived among you for your sake” (v.5). What would it look like for you to live *for the sake of others* in your family, workplace, or friendships? Why is living an others-centered life so countercultural today?
5. Paul describes the Thessalonians’ life of faith, love, and hope (v.3). Which of those three do you want God to grow most in you right now? Their faith “sounded forth everywhere” (v.8). What are some natural ways our faith can “sound forth” without forcing it?
6. The Thessalonians lived with eyes fixed on Christ’s return (v.10). How does remembering Jesus’ return change how we face challenges today? Where do you need endurance inspired by hope in your life right now?