

# The Ripple Effect

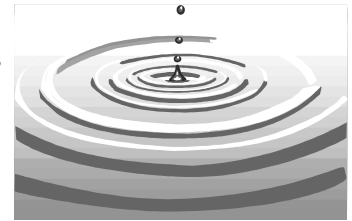
*Studies in 1 & 2 Thessalonians*

## The Final Approach

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2:12

There is excitement and anticipation when the flight attendant informs everyone that the plane is about to enter the final approach before landing. Passengers buckle their seatbelts, start looking out the windows, and some begin praying as the plane circles and gets ready to touch down on the runway. As Paul wrote his second letter to the young church at Thessalonica he had some things to say concerning our "final approach" before Jesus' return. He had written in his first letter about the second coming of the Lord, which had apparently stirred up some questions that were in need of an answer—questions that we often have as well. One of those concerns is who will "make the grade" when Christ comes back. While the Thessalonians didn't ask that

question directly, Paul still affirmed that their lifestyles offered proof of their acceptance when Jesus returned. Although they were suffering, their faith, love, endurance, and desire for goodness showed that God had strengthened them because they were His own, and had counted them worthy of His Name and glory. Another question in their mind was whether or not their persecutors would have to answer for their evil actions. Paul informed them that God promised to decisively render justice when Jesus returned, rendering affliction for affliction as they received the penalty of eternal destruction away from the presence of God. Finally, many wondered if the "day of the Lord" and His judgment had already oc-



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curred. Paul refuted this thought, however, instructing them that the precursor to the end—a general falling away (apostasy) of professing believers, and the revelation of the "man of sin", who would be energized by Satan himself—had not yet occurred. Paul's exhortation, in view of these answers, was to remain calm, to stand firm in the midst of suffering, and to live worthy of their calling as the final approach drew near.

### The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- Worship—You were planned for God's pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God's family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

## Study Questions for 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2:12

*(For answers to questions attend an ABF or go to [www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader resources](http://www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader_resources))*

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| 1. Read 1:1-2. What did Paul pray that God would give to the Thessalonians (v2)? What do these mean, and where would these come from (v2)?      |  |
| 2. From 1:3-5 what was the evidence of God's work in the Thessalonians' lives (v3, 4, 5)? How would someone describe the evidence in your life? |  |
| 3. According to 1:11-12 what should be the immediate goal for our Christian life (v11), and the ultimate goal (v12)?                            |  |

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## 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2:12 Study Questions (cont)

4. Using 1:6-8, what will God do for the persecuted (v7), and to the persecutors (6, 8), and why (v8)? When will He do this (v7)?	
5. Based on 1:9-10 what will be the penalty for those who have rejected God (v9), and the blessing for those who have believed (v10)?	
6. From 2:1-2 what was apparently being rumored in that day (v2)? How were they to react to such rumors (v2—compare Matthew 24:23-27)?	
7. In 2:3-5 what did Paul say would happen before the Lord's return (v3-4), What would this 'man of sin' be like? Is there any sign of this today?	
8. According to 2:6-7 what "mystery" is already at work (v7), and what will allow this to be fully in effect (v6, 7b)? How does this make you feel?	
9. Looking at 2:8-10 what is the "lawless one" like (v9-10), who will this affect (v10), and who will stop him (v8)?	
10. From 2:11-12 what will happen to those who have chosen to reject Christ (v11), and why (v12)? What does this teach us?	
11. From this study, list some reasons to be encouraged when we suffer for the Lord in this life. What is at least one thing you can apply to your life from this study?	

### Scripture to Remember

*"We constantly pray for you,  
that our God may count you  
worthy of his calling...."*

**2 Thessalonians 1:11a (NIV)**

### Celebration Fellowship

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### Life Group Questions—Worshiping Together

*(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)*

1. How would you feel if you found 8 or 10 \$100 bills on the street? Overall, how would you describe your relationship with money?
2. Read Philippians 4:15-17 and Matthew 6:21. Then, talk about why generosity creates "connections of the heart"?
3. Define materialism. Why do you think generosity defeats it?
4. What is the difference between just "giving" and generosity? How does generosity develop our faith, and how does it reflect the character of God?
5. When is it right to make financial investments that lead to personal gain, and when should we decide to invest that same money in eternal things? What are some ways to invest in eternity?
6. Discuss anything else that impressed you from the message today if you have time.