

Growing Together!

For Children Ages 4 Through 11
To Be Used by Teachers and Students

March, April,
May 2019



SPRING
QUARTER

NEW!



A Children's
Version
of the
Adult Lessons



Growing Together!



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March, April, May 2019

Editorial	2
New Teaching	
UNIT I: New in Christ	
Mar. 3—Turning from Idols to God—I Thessalonians 1:1-10.....	3
Mar. 10—Keep Loving God—I Thessalonians 3:1-13	7
Mar. 17—Living a New Way—I Thessalonians 4:1-12.....	10
Mar. 24—Comforting Words—I Thessalonians 4:13—5:10	14
UNIT II: New Growth	
Mar. 31—Safe in Jesus—II Thessalonians 1:1-12.....	17
Apr. 7—The Lord Will Return!—II Thessalonians 2:1-12.....	21
Apr. 14—Keep Trusting Jesus—II Thessalonians 2:13—3:5.....	24
UNIT III: The True Gospel	
Apr. 21—The Gospel Is Still True (Easter)—Galatians 1:6-9; Matthew 28:1-7, 18-20	28
Apr. 28—Paul and the Gospel—Galatians 1:10-24	31
May 5—The Gospel Was Foretold—Galatians 3:1-14	35
May 12—Faith in Jesus—Galatians 3:15-25.....	38
May 19—Saved by God’s Grace—Galatians 3:26—4:7.....	42
May 26—Led by God’s Spirit—Galatians 6:1-10	45



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Union Gospel Press is pleased to introduce the newest publication in the “Christian Life Series,” *Growing Together!* This quarterly was developed to serve the needs of our customers who desire the adult and children’s Sunday school lessons to be based on the same Scripture passages.

Growing Together! serves both as a learning tool for students ages four through eleven as well as a teaching tool for teachers.

We trust that this resource will help the children and adults in your Sunday school program GROW—together!

NEW TEACHING

The Apostle Paul traveled far and wide telling others about the good news of Jesus. He preached to Jews, who worshipped God, and Gentiles, who worshipped idols. He was not always welcomed with this message. Sometimes he had to quickly leave a city, or even a whole region, to escape people who were angered by his message. Paul had to send letters to new Christians in these places to teach them the things he did not have time to teach them when he was there in person. Some of these letters (called epistles) are now a part of our Bibles.

The lessons for this quarter focus on a few of Paul’s teachings on how a new Christian develops new behaviors, grows his faith in times of trouble, and stays loyal to the true gospel.

In the first unit, we see how Paul helped the new Christians in Thessalonica. Those Gentiles had no understanding about how to worship God by living lives of love and holiness. Paul helped them understand that the change in their hearts should be seen in new actions. No longer living immoral lives and worshipping idols, they needed their lives to show a love for God and for others.

The second unit gives us an understanding of what growing in your faith looks like. Paul began his second letter to the Christians in Thessalonica praising them for their spiritual growth. He spent more time reassuring them and calming their fears about what may happen when Jesus returns to judge the world. Paul reminded them to hold on to the truths he had taught them and not to be swayed by false teachers.

In the final unit, the importance of holding to the pure truth of the gospel is the focus. We revisit Jesus’ own words about His death and resurrection as a foundation to Paul’s teachings. Paul used forceful language in his letter to the Christians in Galatia regarding their willingness to believe corrupt teachings about what it means to be a Christian. Paul spent time laying out a powerful defense against what false teachers had fooled the Galatians into believing. He explained that sincere faith in the true gospel of Christ brings freedom and produces behavior that is loving and righteous.

What a blessing that we have these critical teachings from Paul so that we too may grow in our faith!

Turning from Idols to God

GOLDEN TEXT: “They themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (I Thessalonians 1:9).

I Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of

the Holy Ghost:

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.



The Apostle Paul taught the Thessalonians about Jesus, and they turned from idols to worshipping God.



Teacher Helps

To be loyal to someone or something means to be faithful. The Thessalonians became loyal to God the Father and Jesus by turning from their idol worship. Paul commended the Thessalonians for turning from idols to serve the true God. Because they turned from idols, they became a good example of the Christian faith. People far and wide heard about their belief and faith in God.

It was a huge change for the Thessalonians to go from worshipping created things to worshipping the Creator. To illustrate this, bring several common objects from home, or simply use what is in the classroom: a wastebasket, piece of chalk, pencil sharpener, chair. Arrange them at different locations around the room. Ask the students whether they think one of the objects can answer their prayer. Can it talk back? Does it desire what is best for people? Did it create people? (All answers should be no.) Explain to the students that almost any object can become an idol (something people worship) when people put that object in God's place. We should serve only God.

Themes to Stress

- We should worship and serve only God.
- We should follow the example of those who teach us God's Word.
- We should set a good example for others through our strong Christian faith.

Learn It and Live It!

- Ask students to think of people who were examples to them in the faith. Was it a parent or grandparent? An aunt or uncle? Brother or sister? Friend? Teacher? How was this person a good example?
- Bring a selection of popular breakfast cereals. Put a small amount of each in a foam bowl and label the bowl with the name of the cereal. Ask the children what their favorite breakfast cereal is and why they like it. Pass out the cereal to eat as a snack. (Make sure there are no problems with food allergies ahead of time.)
- Help students understand that they have shown loyalty to their favorite cereal. We should also show loyalty to God—much more than to cereal!



Turn to God

A Fictional Story Relating to I Thessalonians 1:1-10

“Should I cheat?” Hagen asked at recess, shaking his Talking Magic 8 Ball.

“Dude, God says cheating is wrong,” said Josh, frowning.

Hagen grinned. “That’s what you believe. I’m trusting this. It says, ‘Without a doubt!’”
“Listen to me. Turn to God. Do not trust that thing!” Josh said.

“I’m doing it.” Hagen shrugged.

So Hagen got detention. “Should I skip detention?” he asked the ball.

“Yes,” it said.

So Hagen was suspended.

Two days without Hagen and the ball brought Josh relief. Then Hagen came back. So did the ball.

“Hey,” Hagen whispered. “Let’s skip practice and go get ice cream.”

Josh shook his head. “I promised Mom I wouldn’t skip practice anymore. If I disobey her, I’m disobeying God.”

“Let’s ask the ball,” said Hagen, giving it a little shake. “Should Josh go to practice?”

“Very doubtful,” it replied.

“See?” Hagen said. “It’ll be fun.”

Josh sighed. “Does that hunk of plastic know everything?”

“No. Duh,” Hagen snorted.

“Then why are you obeying it like it’s your god?” Josh asked.

Hagen did not know what to say.

“God loves you,” Josh said. “When you put your trust in the ball instead of God, you only hurt yourself. You’ve already been suspended. It’ll only get worse. You need to turn to God. He has the answers for this life and the next!”

Hagen thought for a moment. “You’re right. It’s a fun toy, but I’ve let it control me.” Hagen crouched like he was about to shoot a basket. “He shoots!” He threw the ball toward the trash. It rattled as it hit the bottom. “He scores! Now let’s talk about God.”

Josh smiled. “We can do that on the way to practice.”

Turn from idols and serve the one true God.

Bible Story Link: Acts 17:1-10

When the Apostle Paul preached the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection to those in Thessalonica, there were both Jews and a good number of Greeks in attendance. The Greeks were accustomed to worshipping numerous pagan deities such as Zeus and Aphrodite. Idols representing these false gods were often used as objects of worship.

After hearing Paul’s message about the one true God and salvation through His Son, many turned away from worshipping worthless idols and put their faith in God. Within the opening verses of Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonian believers, found in this week’s lesson, he thanks God for them and is glad that they have started worshipping God instead of idols.

SECRET MESSAGE

You will need:

- 1 sheet of card stock per student with “WORSHIP GOD, NOT IDOLS!” printed on it in white crayon
- washable watercolor paint
- paintbrushes
- disposable cups with water for washing brushes



Instructions:

1. Tell each student that there is a secret message on their papers.
2. To uncover it, they must paint over it with the watercolors. Allow students to paint using whatever colors they like.
3. Talk about the message with the students.



Bible Lesson

Do you know what the word “example” means? When a teacher gives you math homework, she may give you an example of a problem so that you have a better idea of what to do. In the Bible, we read of a special group of Christians who were examples. These people were known as the Thessalonian believers.

Remembering. The Apostle Paul was a special follower of Jesus, and it was his job to teach and lead other followers of Jesus. In a letter to the Christians in Thessalonica, Paul wrote that he remembered all they did for Jesus. He thanked God for their love, service, and endurance. Endurance means that they kept following God even though the people around them worshipped idols and made fun of them for following the one true God.

When people remember us and let us know they are thinking of us, we feel happy and encouraged. You can do the same thing for others too. Remember to encourage other followers of Jesus.

Becoming followers. Paul also reminded the Thessalonians that God did something extraordinary among them. He sent them the good news that Jesus saves all who call on Him. Being Jesus’ follower means obeying what He says and worshipping Him in what we say and what we do.

Paul gave two reasons why he knew that God had chosen the Thessalonian Christians to be His children. First, they heard the good news. Second, God sent His Holy Spirit to help the Thessalonians to understand and believe. When

God sends His Holy Spirit to us, He gives us His joy. That means you actually want to serve the Lord; you do not just do things for Him because you have to. Have you ever wanted to do anything you could to make Jesus glad? If not, pray and ask God to light a fire in your soul!

Being examples. The people in the church in Thessalonica worshipped Jesus both in what they said and what they did. They turned from idols and worshipped only God. The Thessalonians were examples for other believers. Paul said that believers in regions called Macedonia and Achaia were looking at them as a model for how to live like Christ. The Thessalonians were a good picture of what it means to love and obey Jesus. In fact, news of the Thessalonian Christians’ faith had spread far and wide.

How does news spread now? You probably hear most things on TV, through the Internet, or maybe in a newspaper. But those things were not around in Paul’s time. People saw the example the Thessalonian Christians set and then told other people about it. That is how the news spread! Walk in Jesus’ light in your everyday life, and people will notice and tell others.

But you cannot be an example without having an example. Do you have someone in your life who models a Christian life? Maybe it is someone in your family, like your Mom, Dad, Grandma, or Grandpa. If you do not have someone who is an example of following Jesus, ask your Sunday school teacher how to find someone like that at your church.

And above everything else, remember to follow Christ as your first and most important example.

Paul Says

The Thessalonians were faithful to follow the teachings Paul had given them when he was with them. He wanted to make sure they would not also follow commands that were not what he taught them. Play a few rounds of Simon Says, but change the game’s name to Paul Says. Lead the first round. Call out a series of commands such as:

- Raise your arms in praise. • Touch your toes. • Clap your hands. • Kneel in prayer. • Touch your head.
- Touch your shoulders. • Say, “Thank You, God.” • Stand up tall. • Stand on one foot. • Put hands on hips.
- Be still. • Run in place. • Tell someone, “Jesus loves you!” • Say, “Amen.” • Sit down on the floor.

The winner of each round can be Paul (the caller) in the next round.

Choose the Correct Answer

Read I Thessalonians 1:1-10. Then select the best word or phrase to complete each sentence.

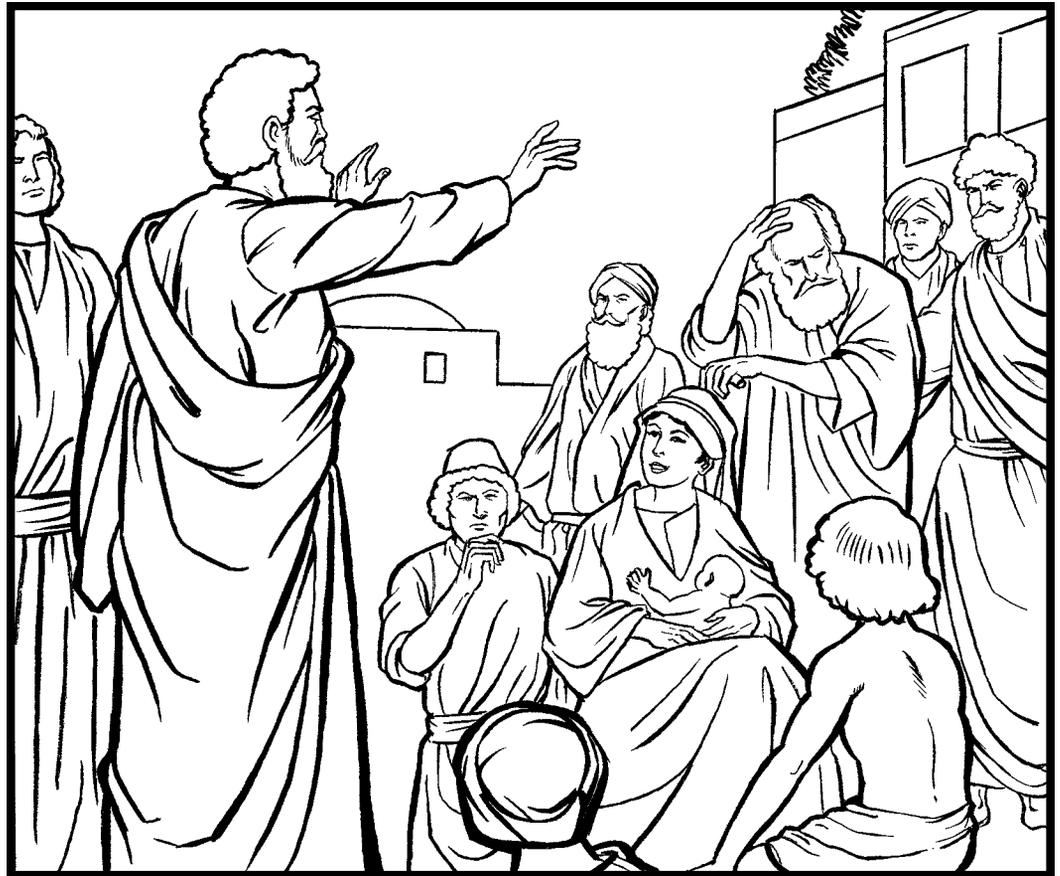
1. In Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians, he wished them all _____ (chaos and confusion, grace and peace).
2. Paul reminded them of how he and his fellow _____ (missionaries, Pharisees) had first brought them the gospel message.
3. The Thessalonian believers had endured _____ (afflictions, many compliments) because of their faith in Christ.
4. The Thessalonians had turned away from _____ (Paul’s teachings, idols) and embraced the one true God.

BIBLE PICTURES TO COLOR



Lesson 1

The Apostle Paul taught the Thessalonians about Jesus, and they turned from idols to worshipping God.



Lesson 2

God encourages His people to live according to His teachings, no matter what others around them are doing.