**It is generally accepted that I Thessalonians is the first letter written by Paul to a church. It sets a pattern for all of Paul’s epistles, from which we understand WHY Paul communicated with the churches by writing.**

**First, Paul’s letters are *personal*. They express his love and care for the saints of God. Paul usually opens with greetings to the church, often mentioning specific individuals. He closes many of his letters the same way. Throughout, he declares his love for the church, even in those situations where he has harsh words for them (I Corinthians, Galatians). Indeed, four of Paul’s letters were in fact written to a specific person (I/II Timothy, Titus, Philemon).**

**Second, Paul’s letters are *doctrinal*. They expound upon the basic beliefs of the Christian church. In I Thessalonians, Paul teaches the church about the resurrection of the saints and the return of the Lord (the second coming of Christ). This was to address the concern in the early church about those who had died, and whether they would ever see the Lord.**

**Third, Paul’s letters are *practical*. Paul emphasizes the importance of practicing a Christian lifestyle. He offers day-to-day instructions for the saints. I Thessalonians concludes with a collection of brief but powerful “commandments”, worthy of “meditation and memorization”.**

**Lastly, Paul’s letters are *prophetic*. Paul reveals to the church those things that the Holy Spirit has revealed to him. Paul often calls these “mysteries” (I Corinthians 2:7-10). The purpose of these revelations is not to make us proud (“I know something you don’t know!”), but to make us *prepared* for the return of our Lord, and to avoid being deceived by false teachers.**

**Paul’s love for the God’s people, the church, his desire for their well-being, and his prayers for their continued growth in the faith set a wonderful example of pastoral care.**

1. **Read I Thessalonians 1:1-4. Who joined Paul in his greeting to the church of the Thessalonians? (v.1) Answer:**
2. **“Silvanus” is another name for . (v.1)**
3. **What is the “spiritual location” of the church? (v. 1) Answer: The church is “ God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ”. See also John 17:20-23.**
4. **What TWO things are Paul and his fellow workers doing for the Thessalonian church? (v. 2)**
5. **What THREE things are they “remembering without ceasing” about the church in Thessalonica? (v. 3)**
6. **What ONE thing do they KNOW concerning the saints in Thessalonica? (v. 4) Answer: They know “your of God”. (See also I Peter 1:1-2, 2:1-10; Revelation 17:14; Ephesians 1:3-6)**
7. **Read verses 5-7. How did the Gospel come to the people of Thessalonica? (v.5) Answer: It came in , in , in the , and in much . When we evangelize, what does this verse suggest that we need to do FIRST?**
8. **In verse 6, Paul states that the Thessalonians “became of , and of the .” Is it important for Christians to “walk the talk”? If so, why? What effect does this have on the growth of the church? (See also Matthew 11:28-30, 23:15; Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 4:1-3, 5:1-10)**
9. **What did the Thessalonians become to all of the Christians in their region, and beyond? (v. 7) Answer: They were (Greek tupos - “type”, a model or pattern) See I Corinthians 10:11, I Peter 5:1-3**
10. **Read verses 8-10. What “sounded out” from the church in Thessalonica? (v.8)**
11. **The words and deeds of the Thessalonian Christians were proof that they had “turned to from .” (v. 9) What is the word that describes this wonderful transformation? Hint: see Matthew 3:1-12; Matthew 4:17; Luke 13:1-5Acts 17:30-31; II Peter 3:9 Answer:**
12. **In addition to serving the “living and true God”, the Thessalonian saints were waiting for what blessed future event? (v. 10) Hint: see Matthew 25:31-33; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:6-11; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 1:7**

**Conclusion**

**The first chapter of this letter is focused on the Thessalonians. Paul gives thanks to God for their “work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope” in Jesus Christ. He reminds them of how they demonstrated true repentance by turning away from their worship of idols, to the worship and service of the “true and living God”. So great was the faith of these saints that they, in the words of an old gospel song, “couldn’t keep it to themselves”. The Thessalonian church became an active center of evangelism throughout northern Greece. This first chapter helps answer the question: what kind of people can God use to grow a church?**

**In the second chapter of this letter, Paul turns his focus to himself, and those with him who helped plant the church. The second chapter gives us insights for effective church leadership. It helps answer the question: what kind of pastor can God use to grow a church? As we study this chapter, let’s look for those attributes that every pastor should have.**