

A SERIES IN 1 THESSALONIANS



SMALL GROUP STUDIES

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

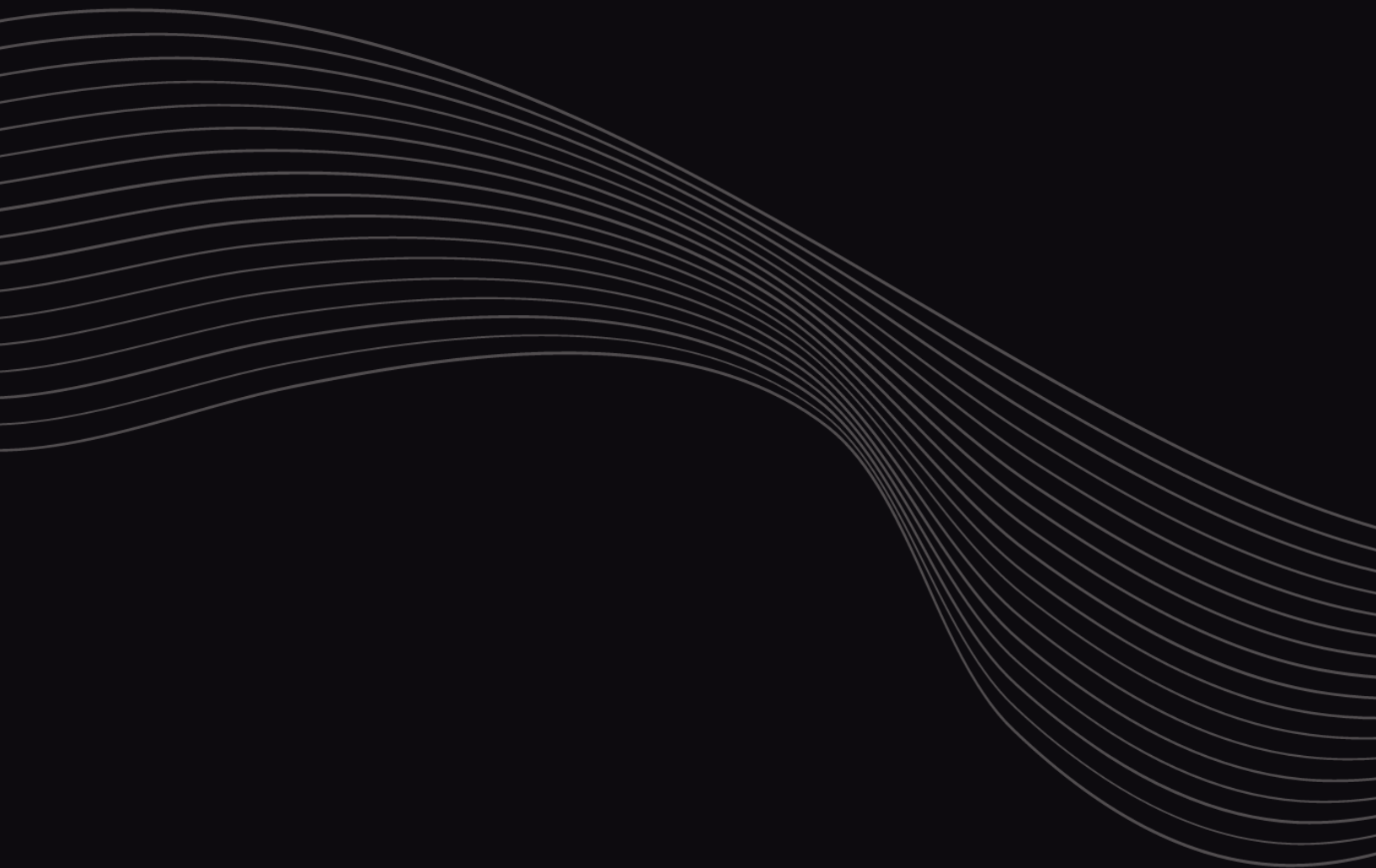
This study was produced mainly using the commentary on  
1 and 2 Thessalonians by Gene L. Green.

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“Grace and peace to you”

**1 THESSALONIANS 1:1A**



## STUDY ONE

# Overflow of Courage

### *Passages:*

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Acts 17:1-15

## BACKGROUND

*Read Acts 16:9 and 17:1-9.*

Thessalonica was founded in 316BC by Cassander, king of Macedonia, by the joining together of 26 villages. This city was established as a port city because of its good location. It offered deep anchorage and shelter from winds. It gave excellent access via the Mediterranean to the islands and the cities of the Aegean Sea and beyond to the great ports in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt.

This city was a wealthy city also. It drew economic strength from its port and also its agriculture. The land surrounding this city was fertile and good for agriculture. Thessalonica was also an important city for the Roman empire as well because of its port and its location on the Via Egnatia, an important road in the empire.

This city was a hub in the empire that would become the centre of the Christian mission in Macedonia.

Paul would only spend a few weeks in this city but they responded to the gospel in amazing ways. In Acts 17:2 we are told that Paul preached on 3 Sabbath days indicating that they were there for three or four weeks. However, the persecution came thick and fast.

## INTRODUCE THE ISSUE

These letters help us to focus on how we should live in the light of what Jesus has done and his imminent second coming. This is all under persecution as we read in Acts 17:1-9, we need to stand firm.

## **QUESTIONS**

**1. In Acts 16:6-7 the apostle Paul and his companions had plans to preach in the province of Asia. Paul has a vision but who decided whether they should go?**

**2. Given the opposition Paul and his companions faced in Thessalonica, did they make the right decision to go there? Why or why not (try to put yourself in their shoes)?**

**3. What was the cause of the opposition?**

**4. In Acts 17:6-9 what do we learn about the believers in Thessalonica?**

**5. In Acts 17:7 we see the accusation against the believers and it is a half truth. In what ways is the Christian message discredited in half truths?**

## **THINK IT THROUGH**

**In Acts 17:3 we are told that Paul and his companions were explaining to them, from the Scriptures, that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. Where in the Old Testament would you go to explain this? Why is it important to know?**

## **MAKING IT STICK**

**How do we respond to accusations about our beliefs?**


**How could we do this better?**

## **PRAYER**

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- John Gray as he leads our church.
- Our wardens, that God will grant them wisdom as they steward our finances and property.
- Rod and Abby Bishop in their roles at ECM (European Christian Mission)
- That growth in our Christian walk will be impacted by the majesty and holiness of a God who is bigger than we imagine yet mindful of us so that we are known by him.





“We always thank God for all of you,  
mentioning you in our prayers.  
We continually remember before our  
God and Father your work produced  
by faith, your labour prompted by love,  
and your endurance inspired by hope in  
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-3**



## **STUDY TWO**

# **Overflow of Faith, Hope and Love**

*Passage:*

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

## **QUESTIONS**

**1. In Verse 2 and 3 Paul begins talking about praying for Thessalonian Christians. What three things show their understanding of the gospel? What is the result of these three things?**

**2. How did the things that Paul remembers in his prayer come about (1:4-10)?**

**3. Why is it important that they should imitate the Lord? Who do you look to for inspiration with regard to your faith?**

**4. How did their faith in God become known everywhere (verse 8)?**

**5. What has Jesus rescued us from and how have we been rescued (verse 10)?**

## **THINK IT THROUGH**

**In verse 5 Paul mentions the “gospel” that came to them. What elements of the gospel do you see in verses 5-10? What do you think is the role of the Holy Spirit in the proclamation of this gospel?**

## **MAKING IT STICK**

**How do Thessalonians respond to gospel? How do we respond to the gospel?**

**What kind of work is produced by faith?**

**How is our labour prompted by love?**

## **PRAYER**

**In addition to responding to today’s passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:**

- **Pat Jones and Emma Sibley as they lead our youth ministries. Ask for wisdom, and for God to sustain them. Pray that the leaders in youth ministry will show God’s love to those in their care and that many will be won for the kingdom.**
- **Our parish council, that God will grant them wisdom as they steward our finances and property.**
- **Pray that as we live holy lives in obedience to God we will do it joyfully and with gratitude, knowing that God is for us and wants what is best for us. Perhaps you could finish with Philippians 1:9-11.**

“And we thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you.”

**1 THESSALONIANS 2:13**

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## **STUDY THREE**

# **Overflow of the Gospel of Love**

*Passage:*

1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Why does Paul want to remind them of how he brought the gospel to them (1-12)?
2. What level of importance does Paul place on the message about Jesus (verses 2:4b-6b)? How do we know this?
3. Does sharing the gospel bring you joy or delight you (verse 8)?
4. What does it mean to share your life (verse 8)?

**5. How do verses 8 and 9 help us understand verse 7 and being like a mother (perhaps refer to chapter 1 and the use of trinity)?**

**6. How does a fathers role differ to a mothers (verse 11-12)?**

**7. Should these characteristics be found in all of us as a body of believers (1:6)?**

**8. How did the Thessalonians receive the gospel that Paul brought to them (13-16)?**

## **THINK IT THROUGH**

**What things are important to remember when taking the gospel to the lost?**

**Will the spread of the gospel bring an easy life and acceptance by everyone?**

**In these verses Paul is talking about opposition, about the work they did to support themselves and the fact that they shared their lives with the Thessalonians. What seems to be Paul's priority through this?**

## **MAKING IT STICK**

**How have you responded to the gospel that you have accepted?**

**What kind of opposition do you/we face to the gospel?**

**How should we respond to this opposition? Perhaps use a particular example.**

## **A LITTLE DEEPER**

**What issues in the Thessalonian church is Paul trying to deal with?**

**Verse 4. What does it mean to be entrusted with the gospel?**


**Verse 6. What is significant about Paul referring to himself, as apostle?**

**Verse 16. What does Paul mean by “they always heap their sins to the limit”? How has the wrath of God come upon them? There is a sense of justice. God has the last say.**

## **PRAYER**

In addition to responding to today’s passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- For Linda Stephens and Naomi Pigot as they lead our children’s ministries.
- Keith Baker as he oversees the generations ministries.
- Norm and Janelle Gorrie serving with CMS in Kenya as they strengthen believers and reach the lost.



“For now we really live, since you  
are standing firm in the Lord. How  
can we thank God enough for you in  
return for all the joy we have in the  
presence of our God because of you?”

**1 THESSALONIANS 3:8–9**



## **STUDY FOUR**

# **Overflow of Endurance**

*Passage:*

1 Thessalonians 2:17- 3:13

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why is Paul, Timothy and Silas so keen to get back to Thessalonica? (2:17, Acts 17:1-10)**
- 2. What do you think is the significance of “Satan” stopping them from going back to Thessalonica? (2:18)**
- 3. What does Paul mean when he says that they are his “hope”?**

**4. What does Paul mean when he says these people are his crown or his glory? (v20)**

**5. Why did Paul and Silas send Timothy to Thessalonica? (vv2-3)**

**6. What is Paul's greatest concern regarding the Thessalonians? (v5-6)**

**7. How does Paul know they are standing firm in the Lord? (v8)**

## **THINK IT THROUGH**

**In 3: 5b, do we see a lack of faith in God on Paul's part? If not why not?**

**What do you think it means to for their love to increase and overflow? Who is it that makes this happen?(3:12)**

## **MAKING IT STICK**

**Do you know of anyone that is your glory and your crown?**

**In what ways do you show your love “for each other” and for “everyone else?”**

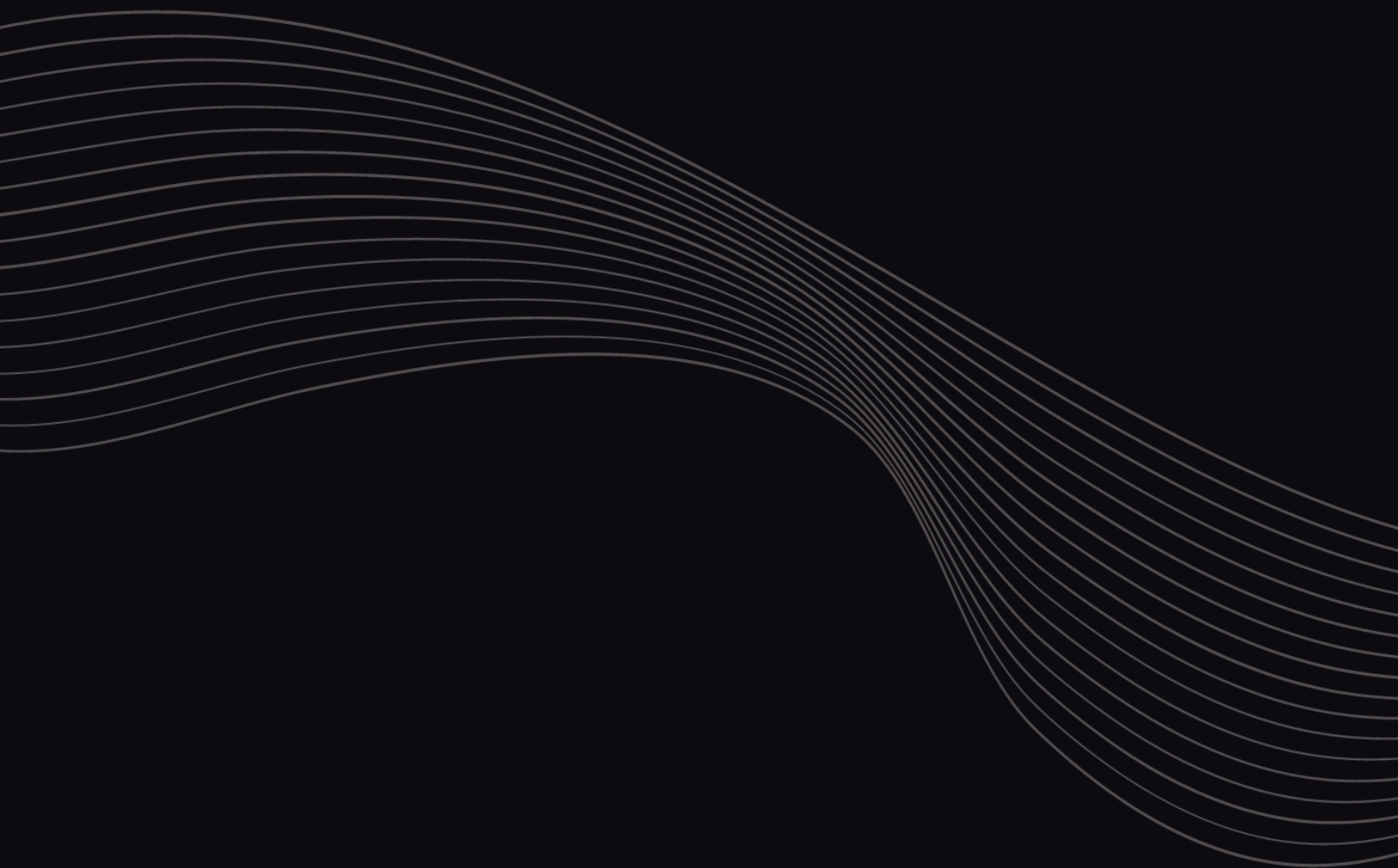
## **PRAYER**

In addition to responding to today’s passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Care Ministry at St Paul’s and for the Care Minister Fiona Smith as she leads the teams. Please be praying for the Sunday Care Teams at each of our services, prayer ministry, practical care, Help at Home Days, and the many teams providing care and support to people across our church.
- John & Fiona (Zeke and Clay) - Pray as they prepare to head back to SE Asia

“For God did not call us to be  
impure, but to live a holy life.”

**1 THESSALONIANS 4:7**



## STUDY FIVE

# Overflow of Holiness

*Passage:*

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

### QUESTIONS

1. What does Paul ask them to do “more and more?” (4:1)
2. Why does Paul want the Thessalonians to know that the instructions for moral behaviour come from Jesus not from the apostles?
3. What is Paul asking the Thessalonians to work on regarding their sanctification (4:3) or holiness (4:7)? Is there an area that you need to work on, with God’s help?
4. We are called to be Holy, which means set apart, to live differently and in a way that will bring glory to God. Paul talks specifically about sexual immorality. How are the Thessalonian Christians to avoid sexual immorality (v3-8)?
5. What kind of love do the Thessalonians show each other (v9)? What are some characteristics of this love?

**6. How does Paul ask these people to live given their new lives as Christians (v11)? Give examples.**

**7. What will be the result of living such lives (v12)?**

## **THINK IT THROUGH**

**What does it mean that we should be sanctified (4:3ff)?**

## **MAKING IT STICK**

**What kind of love does Paul have in mind in verses 9-12?**


**What does this love involve?**

**How does verse 11 help us understand and display this kind of love?**

## **PRAYER**

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Discipleship ministry at church and Paul Lucas as he leads the Discipleship Team.
- For small group leaders across the church, for their encouragement and growth and the raising up of new leaders
- For those involved with Read with Me (one to one bible reading) with others and for the growth of this ministry for sharing the gospel and growth as disciples.



“For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.”

**1 THESSALONIANS 4:14**



## STUDY SIX

# Overflow of Hope

*Passage:*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

## QUESTIONS

1. What do you think Paul means by those who are asleep (v13)?
2. Is Paul saying that we should not grieve (v13)? What is he saying about grief?
3. What is Christian hope (v14)?
4. How can a Christian be sure of what they hope for?
5. Do you find these words encouraging (v18)? How would you use them to encourage others going through a difficult time?

## **THINK IT THROUGH**

**In verse 17, Paul says that we will meet the Lord in the air. What do you make of this and where does Paul get this idea from?**

## **MAKING IT STICK**

**How can we learn to grieve well?**

**How do we encourage others in their grief?**

## **PRAYER**

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pray for our Young Adults ministry.
- Pray for Brendan and Karina Pont and praise that they have been able to return to SE Asia this year.
- Give thanks to God for being generous to us and for the generosity of his people in their giving that ministries in our church can continue.
- Give thanks that God made provision for our holiness and for strength to remain holy in our hearts, minds and actions.

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.”

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:9-10**

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## STUDY SEVEN

# Overflow of Encouragement

### *Passage:*

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

## QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever wondered about the specifics of the Day of the Lord? Before reading this passage, do you think it's important for us as Christians to know when the day of the Lord will come? Discuss.
2. Read 1 Thess 5:1-5. Considering the Thessalonians are under persecution at this time, what does Paul write to them and why is it of any comfort or encouragement to them? What do you think Paul means when comparing children of the Light & Day and Darkness & Night?
3. Why do you think it is important for Paul to remind the Thessalonians of this truth? And therefore why is it important for us to remind ourselves and each other that we are Children of the light and of the day?
4. Read 1 Thess 5:6-11. How should a Christian prepare themselves for the Day of the Lord even though no one knows the hour?
5. In verse 8 what does Paul ask them to be? What do you think this means?

**6. Read v 9-10. What is different for us as Christians? What does this mean for us?**

**7. What does Paul ask Thessalonian church AND us to do in vv11? What are we to encourage one another in and towards?**

## **THINK IT THROUGH**

**How is 5:8 seen in the light of 1:3? What do you think Paul is wanting the Thessalonians to do while they wait for Jesus return?**

## **MAKING IT STICK**

**How do you feel when you have been encouraged to persevere until the Day of the Lord?**

**How have you felt when you encourage someone to persevere until the Day of the Lord?**

**In what ways can we encourage and build each other up in the light of verses 5:6-8?**

## **PRAYER**

**In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:**

- **Pray for our interns Sam Heinrich, Nick Clegg, Chelsea Rumbel, Blake Scurr and Alex Furner. Pray that they will enjoy their time, that they will grow in their love and knowledge of Jesus and that they will make good decisions about ministry in the future.**
- **Pray for Matt and Paula Crowe in Colombia.**
- **Pray that we will walk diligently as children of God and citizens of heaven.**
- **Pray for Ben Razey as he leads our Integration ministries.**

“May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-24**

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## STUDY EIGHT

# Overflow of Joy, Thanks and Prayer

*Passage:*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

### QUESTIONS

1. In this letter the themes of faith hope and love have been prominent. According to verse 12-15, how should we love Christians leaders? How should we love other Christians?
2. What does Paul mean by living in peace with each other (v13)?
3. What is the nature of the work of Christian leaders that they should be held in highest regard (v13)?
4. What does it mean to test everything (v21)?



## **THINK IT THROUGH**

**What does Paul mean when he says “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire”? Can you think of other passages to support what you mean?**

**What is Paul’s aim with these final, practical instructions?**

## **LIVE IT OUT**

**What should Christians be doing when they meet together? Give examples.**

**How do verses 23-24 inspire you to endure as a Christian?**

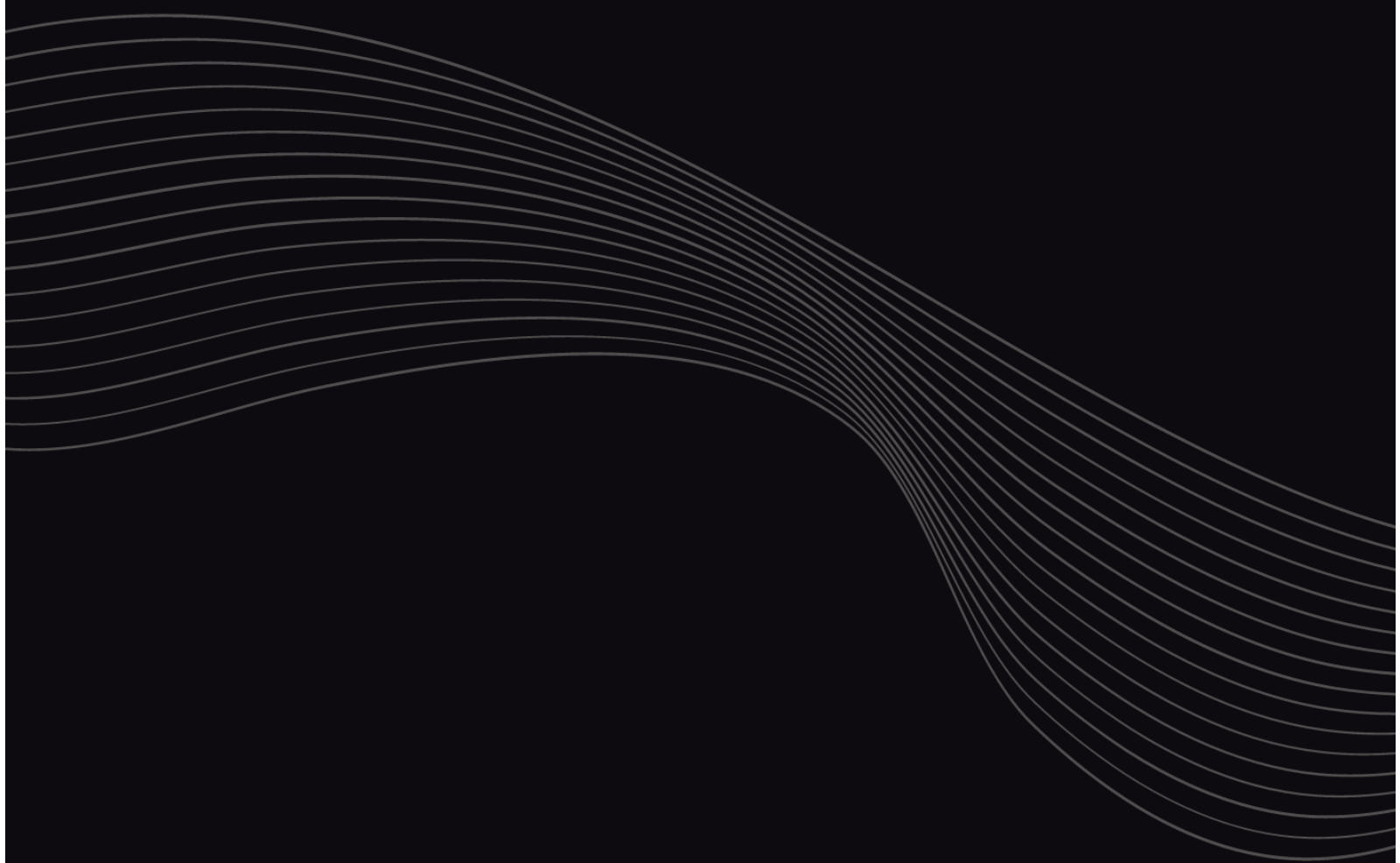
**What has impacted you from this letter?**

## **PRAYER**

In addition to responding to today’s passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pray for our small group leaders, that God will sustain them, give them insight and endurance.
- Pray for Rich Vassallo and his production team (both paid and volunteer). Thank God for their gifts and making it possible to meet online.
- Pray that we will be able to forgive as we have been forgiven.
- Pray that as we relate to each other we will do so with genuine humility and love. That we will do this for the sake of Jesus name and the good of our brothers and sisters.

# SERMON NOTES



**SERMON ONE – SUNDAY 25TH JULY**

# **Overflow of Courage**

**SERMON TWO – SUNDAY 1ST AUGUST**

# **Overflow of Faith, Hope and Love**

**SERMON THREE – SUNDAY 8TH AUGUST**

# **Overflow of the Gospel of Love**

**SERMON FOUR – SUNDAY 15TH AUGUST**

# **Overflow of Endurance**

**SERMON FIVE – SUNDAY 22ND AUGUST**

# **Overflow of Holiness**



**SERMON SIX – SUNDAY 29TH AUGUST**

# **Overflow of Hope**

**SERMON SEVEN – SUNDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER**

# **Overflow of Encouragement**

**SERMON EIGHT – SUNDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER**

# **Overflow of Prayer**

**SERMON NINE – SUNDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER**

# **Overflow of Peace and Confidence**