Lesson—Hope in Christian Fellowship

I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives
   By the end of this lesson, we will…
   1. Examine relationships and conditions within our Christian fellowship during times of separation.
   2. Value the bonds of love, care, and togetherness we share in the Christian communion.
   3. Strengthen, renew, and encourage one another in the faith community.

Why This Lesson Matters: When Paul could not visit the Thessalonians, he sent Timothy to visit them and to encourage their steadfastness as they awaited Christ's return.

Key Verse—(1 Thessalonians 2:13) For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the world of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. (KJV)

Song of Praise and Worship: “Stand Up” by Timothy Wright

II. Points to be Emphasized
   ❖ The Thessalonians received the word that Paul had proclaimed to them and acknowledged its divine origin. Here, “the word of God” refers not to the Bible but to the oral proclamation of the gospel.
   ❖ It is important that the encouragement of others within the Christian community does not manifest itself as hostility or hatred toward those without.
   ❖ Paul's hope and joy were rooted in the meaningful relationships founded on mutual care and love that he had established with those in the Christian fellowship.
   ❖ We might understand community and fellowship as the work of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, it is the forces that stand in opposition to the Spirit that disrupt this sort of communion.

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1 Outline Content courtesy of the Sunday School Publishing Board Teacher Manual, which should be purchased at www.sspbnbc.com
III. Historical/Biblical Background and Lesson Context

First Thessalonians is attributed to Paul and his co-laborers Silas and Timothy. Paul established the church in Thessalonica during his second missionary journey (Circa AD 51). These believers were young in the Christian faith and most likely faced severe persecution, as did other 1st-century believers. Therefore, Paul wrote this letter to encourage them, assure them of his love, praise them for their perspectives and perseverance, and remind them of their eternal hope in Christ's return as Lord and Savior.

First Thessalonians is made-up of five chapters. Chapters 1 through 3 discuss Paul's feelings and concern for the believers. Chapters 4 through 5 address practical concerns, including misconceptions about Christ’s return regarding the resurrection and various additional instructions pertaining to respect for leadership.

Finally, this book contains several practical themes that include encouragement and comfort amid difficulties and losses, reminders concerning the necessity of moral purity, a proper understanding of Christ's return, diffusing interpersonal tensions among believers, and the importance of the exemplary Christian living.

IV. Prominent Character(s) in the Lesson

Paul: Paul the apostle, commonly known as Saint Paul, was an eventual follower of Jesus who professed the gospel of Jesus Christ to the 1st century world period. Paul is commonly regarded as one of the most influential figures of the Apostolic Age, and he founded several churches in Asia Minor and Europe.

V. Key Terms in the Lesson (KJV)

| Accepted | Believe | Desire |
| Imitators | Suffered | Thank |

VI. Topical Outline of the Lesson

1. Introduction
2. An Enthusiastic People (1 Thessalonians 2:13-16)
3. Expectations of Hope and Joy (vv. 17-20)
4. Established in the Faith (1 Thessalonians 3:1-5)

Food for thought and question for consideration: (What have we learned Charlie Brown?)

➢ In your family, circle of friends or co-workers, there are probably those who don’t think or believe as you do. Have you, in Godly Fellowship, loved and encouraged them to believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ?