



**GENRE:** Epistles – Read like a letter.

### 5 Epistles Observations

1. Epistles make up 21 of the 27 books of the New Testament (NOTE: All New Testament books are epistles except for the four gospels, Acts and Revelation).
2. Epistles were \_\_\_\_\_ letters \_\_\_\_\_ written to either a group or an individual for a specific occasion.
3. Epistles were written to address issues in the \_\_\_\_\_ first \_\_\_\_\_ century church.
4. Epistles usually address one of four issues:
  - a. Behavior needing \_\_\_\_\_ correction \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Warning against false teachings
  - c. Misunderstanding between author and audience.
  - d. Encouragement
5. Epistles cannot mean to us now what it did not mean to them then.

**Epistles Reading Rules.** Read the entire epistle 2-3 times and answer 5 questions:

Read: Philippians 1

1. **Who** wrote the epistle? **Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_ Paul \_\_\_\_\_ (Philippians 1:1)
2. To **whom** was it written? **Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_ Saints \_\_\_\_\_ in Philippi (Philippians 1:1)
3. **Why** was it written or what issue or conflict caused the letter to be written?  
**Answer:** To thank the saints (Philippians 1:3-57). Encourage unity (1:27-28, 2:1-2).
4. **What** does the author say about that issue that caused the letter to be written?  
**Answer:** Be unified (Philippians 1:27-28).

**Read** and discover what God communicated to the people *then*.

**Read:** Philippians 1:27-30

**Discover:** Paul encourages the Philippians to be unified in their faith.

**Reflect,** pray and determine what God communicating to us *now*.

**Are you living in unity with the believers in your life?**

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**Respond** and do something. Pray and decide what God wants to do in and through you in the *future*.

**Be unified in your faith** \_\_\_\_\_ **expression** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Be unified in your bold** \_\_\_\_\_ **defense** \_\_\_\_\_ **of our faith against your enemies.**

**Be unified in your** \_\_\_\_\_ **suffering** \_\_\_\_\_ **for the faith.**

5. **How** does it relate and challenge us today?

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*"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" 1 Peter 2:9-10*

Using the guidelines below, here is a daily Bible text for you to READ, REFLECT and RESPOND.

► On Monday and Tuesday, read the whole letter through to get the "big picture." Then, for the rest of the week, zero in on each individual chapter.

**MON** – 1 Thessalonians 1-3    **WED** – 1 Thessalonians 1    **FRI** – 1 Thessalonians 3  
**TUE** – 1 Thessalonians 4-5    **THU** – 1 Thessalonians 2    **SAT** – 1 Thessalonians 4  
**SUN** – 1 Thessalonians 5



**Read** and discover what God communicated to the people at the time of the writing.

Read the text 2-3 times and identify either:

1. Who wrote the epistle?
2. To whom was it written?
3. Why was it written or what issue or conflict caused the letter to be written?
4. What does the author say about the issue that caused the letter to be written?
5. How does it relate to and challenge us today?



**Reflect**, pray and determine what is God communicating to us in the present.

Write, in your own words, a 2-3 sentence prayer or revelation identifying how this letter, written to a church in the first century, applies to us today.



**Respond** and do something!

Do something by praying and deciding what God wants to do in and through you in the future. Identify the steps of faith you need to take in order to facilitate God's promises. What am I going to do to apply my faith to be more of who God wants me to be? Is there sin to repent of? Is there something you can praise God for? Is there someone you need to forgive, serve or speak to? How are you worshiping God in your life?

Further applications – Send a challenge to people in your acquaintance. Be bold in what the Lord is showing you as a step of faith. Use social media to spread the Word of God (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Blog, email, etc.).

**Devotional necessities:** A Bible, pen or pencil, notebook or journal, a quiet place, a regular time, a prayerful heart of faith

**Further your study:** Check out [www.searchgodsword.org](http://www.searchgodsword.org) or [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com) or visit the Rockpile for additional Bible study tools.

# BOOK SIX: LETTERS

## LETTERS: EPISTLES

*{Kingdom principles for everyday life}*

**GENRE** – Epistles – Read like a letter.

**READING RULES** – Read the entire epistle 2-3 times and answer 5 questions:

1. Who wrote the epistle?
2. To whom was it written?
3. Why was it written or what issue or conflict caused the letter to be written?
4. What does the author say about the issue that caused the letter to be written?
5. How does it relate to and challenge us today?