

# The Thessalonian Correspondence

Solid Conversion to the Gospel



# Leaders and a Solid Conversion Process

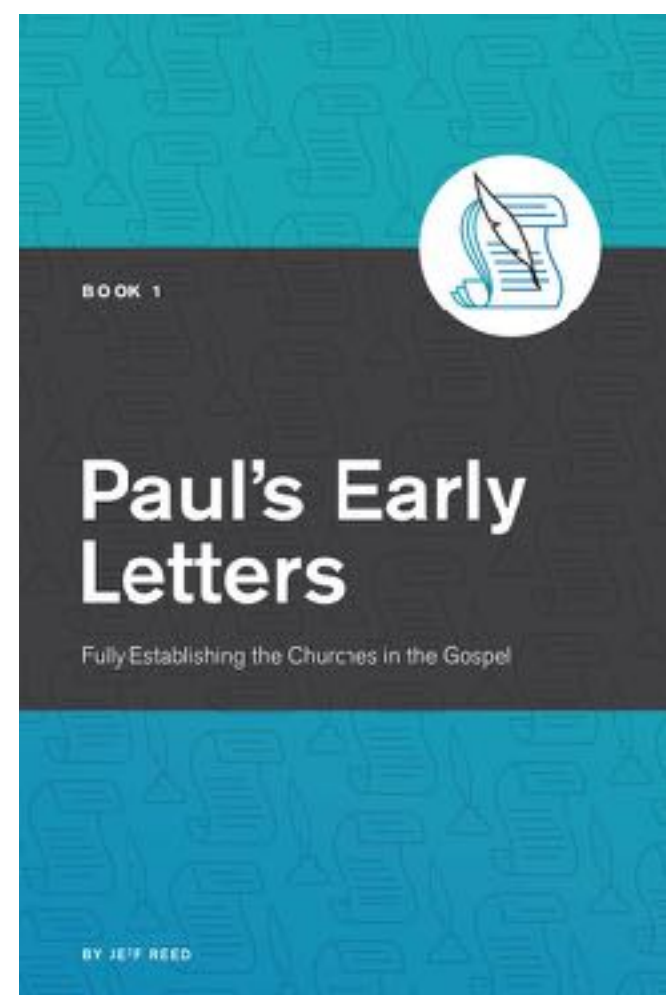
How important are leaders in a solid conversion process? in establishing new and immature believers in the gospel?

If these Sunday mornings are not a church gathering, why are they so important? Why do we want current and future leaders and their families to participate fully?

Why do we sometimes call this teaching “apostolic teaching”? In what sense is apostolic teaching needed to keep a network on course?

What am I doing actually this morning? What was Michael doing with his three S-curves and his Global Dialogue booklet the previous 3 Sundays?

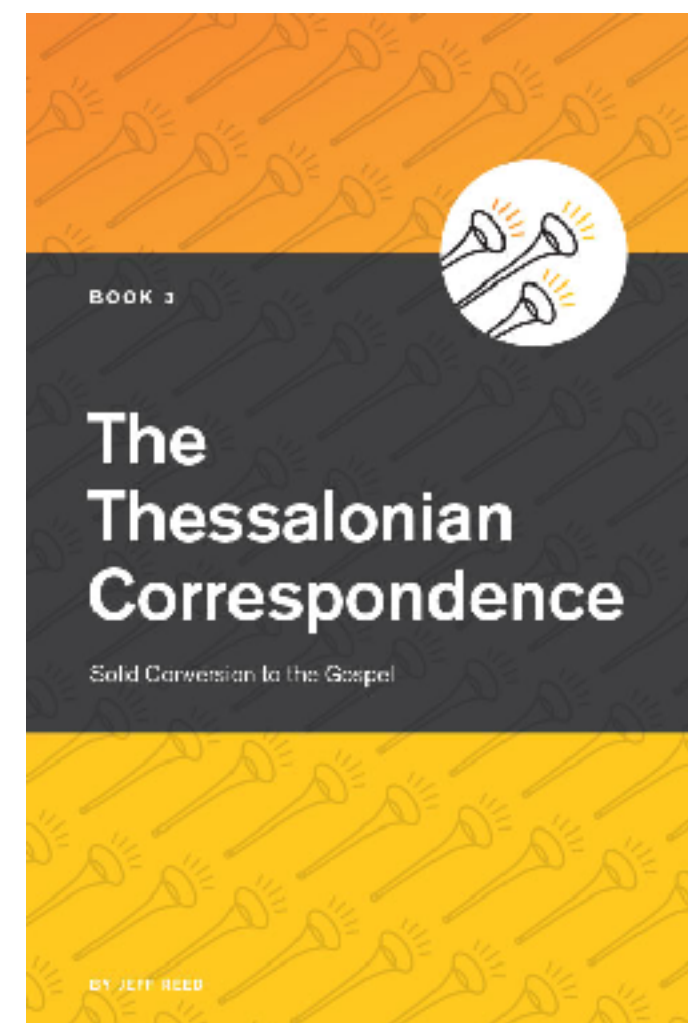
# The New Perspective on Paul



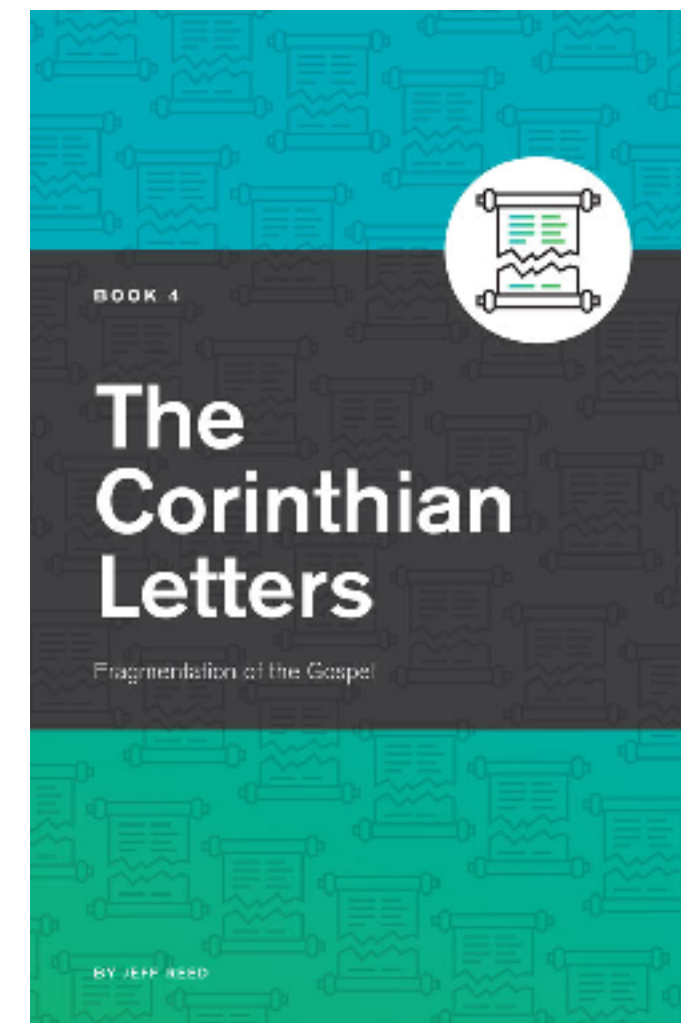
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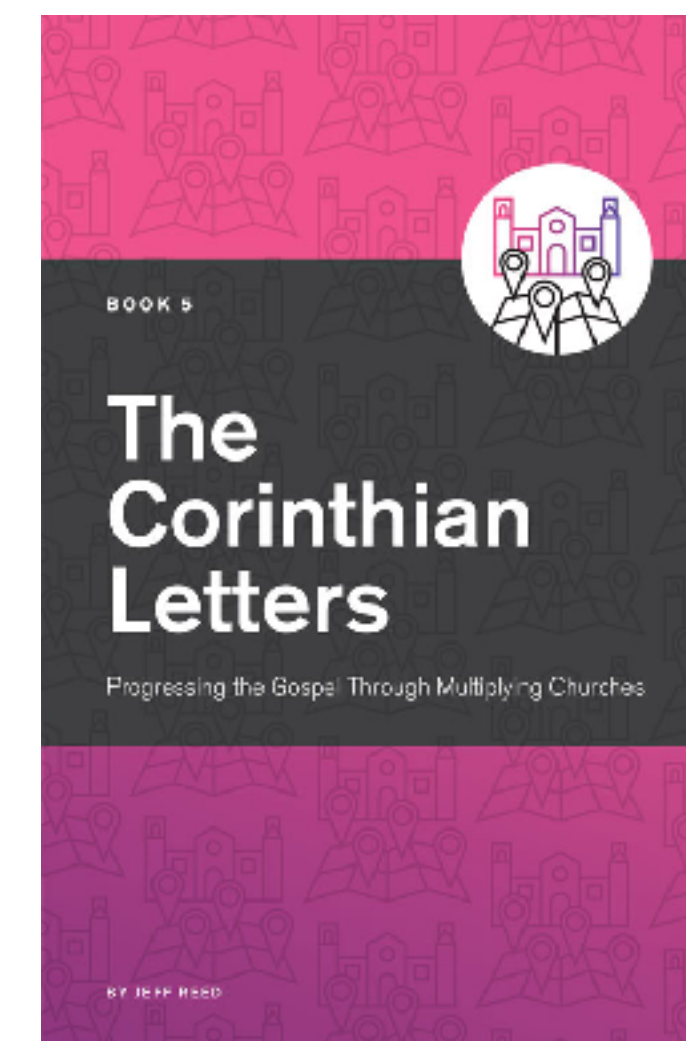
Autumn 49



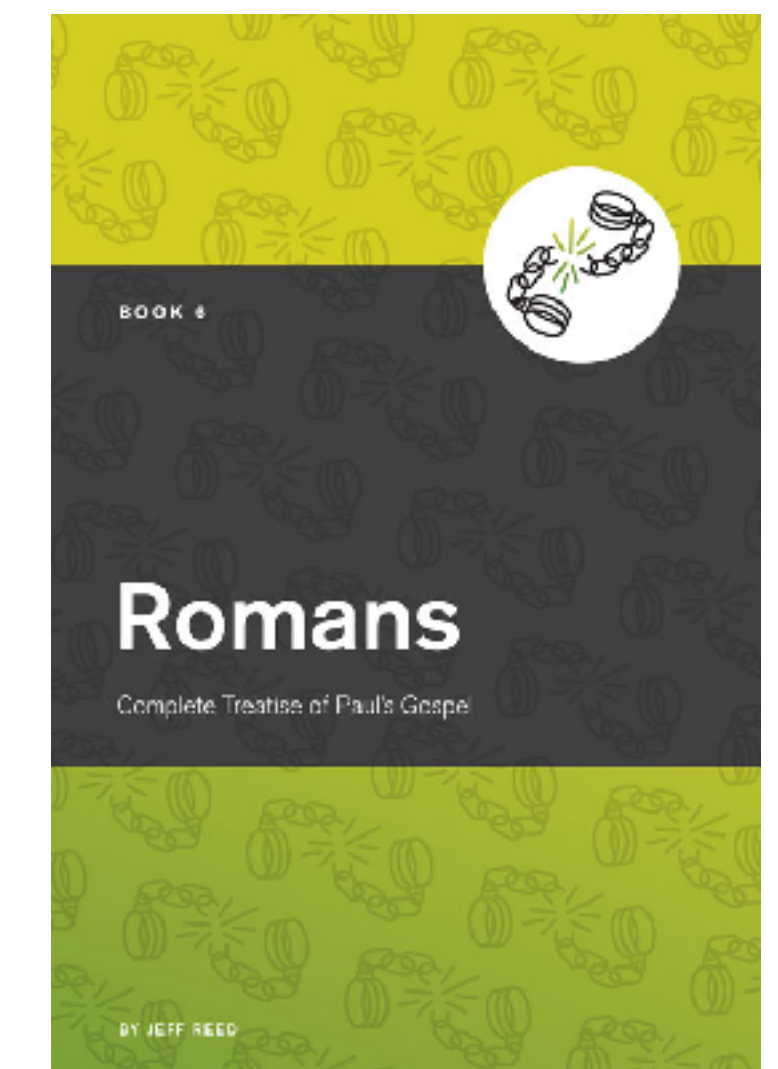
Winter/Summer 51



Sept. 53



June 56



Nov. 56

# The New Perspective on Paul



## The Early Letters

Book 1: Paul's Early Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches in the Gospel

Book 2: Galatians: So Quickly Leaving the Gospel

Book 3: The Thessalonian Correspondence: Solid Conversion to the Gospel

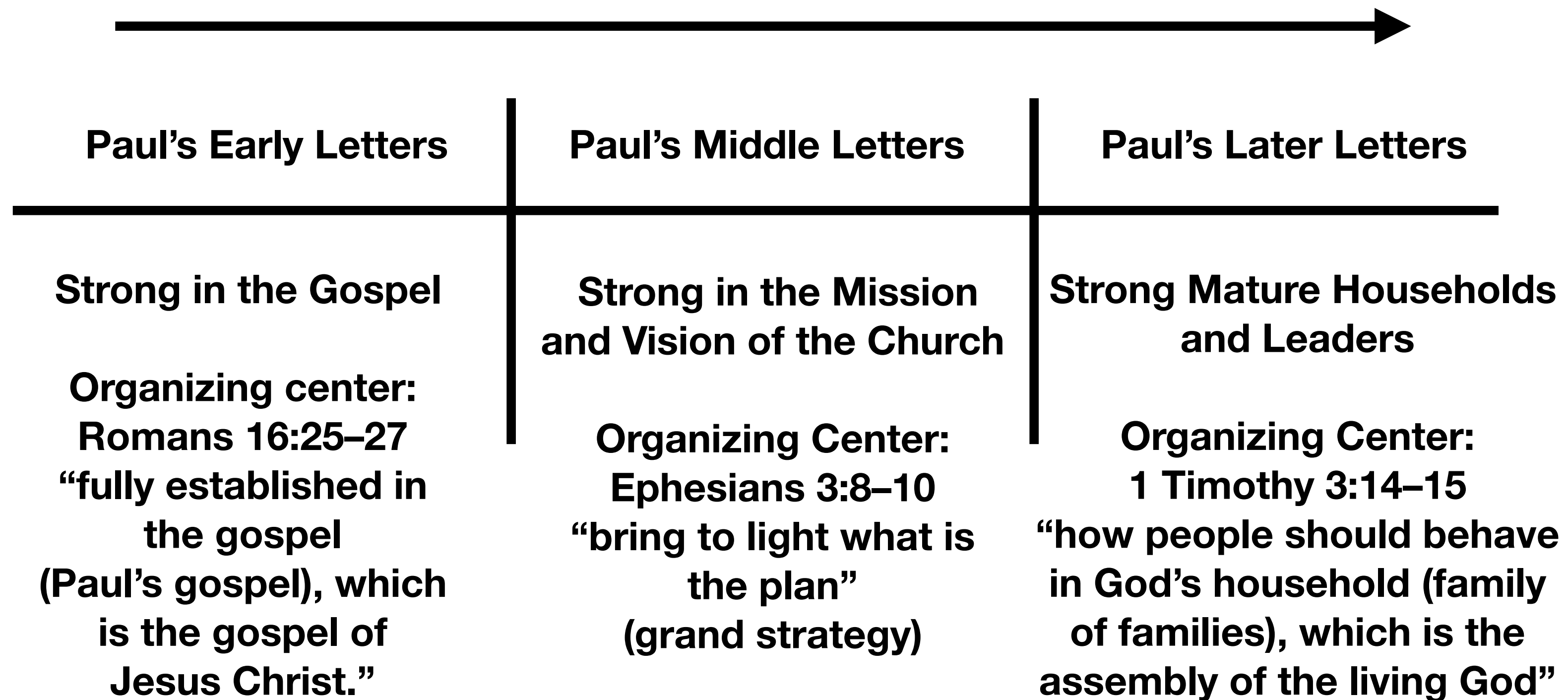
Book 4: The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

Book 5: The Corinthian Letters: Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches

Book 6: Romans: Complete Treatise of Paul's Gospel

# The New Perspective on Paul

Topos Schematic (Overall Framework): Establishing Church Networks (Traditioning Paul)



# Literary Design: Complex Network Establishing (Encoding) Benchmarks (Traditioning of Paul)

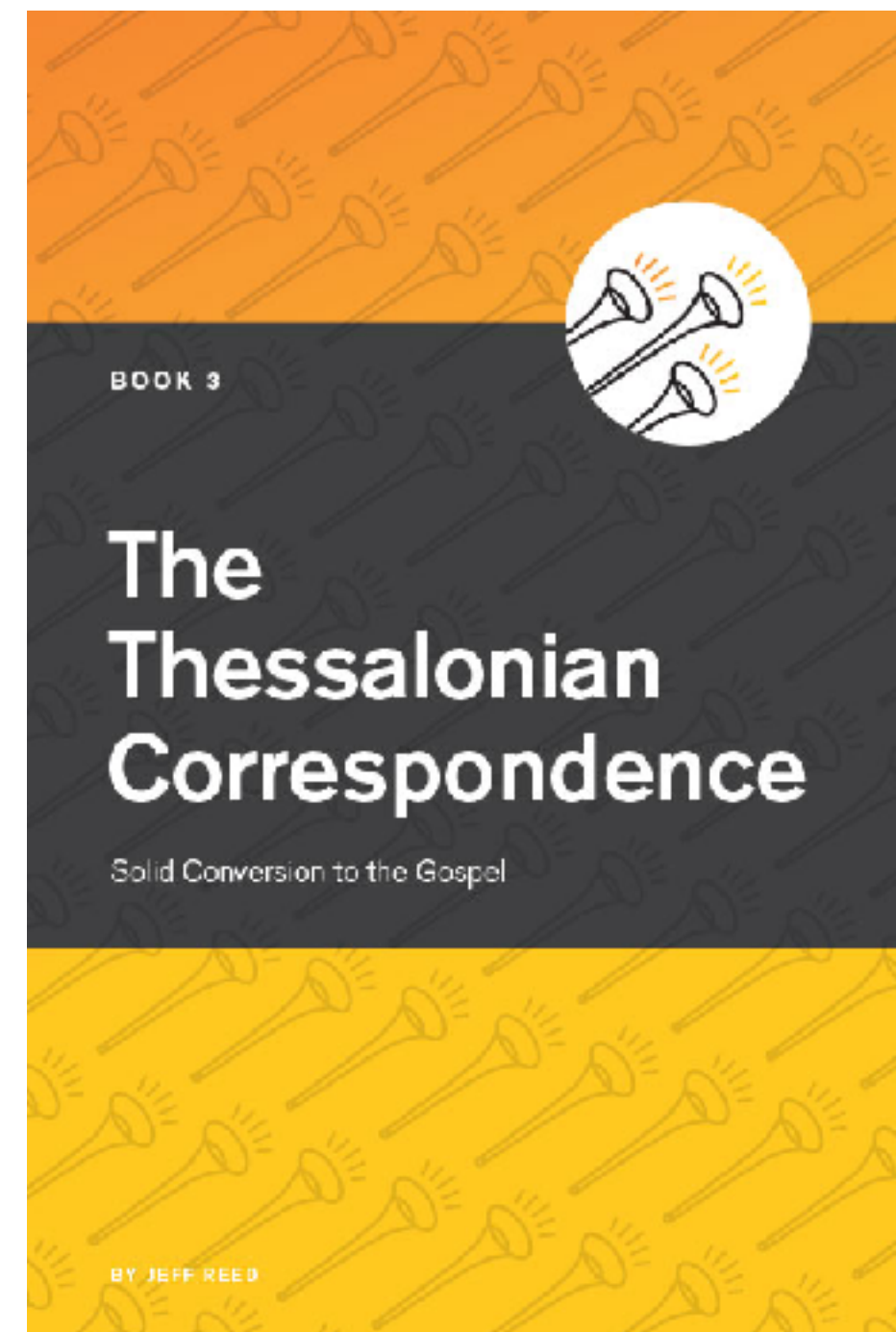


Paul's Early Letters	Paul's Middle Letters	Paul's Later Letters
The Gospel	Mission/Vision of the Church	Mature Households and Leaders
Gospel Formula: 1 Cor. 15:1-6 Peter's 5 sermons, Galatians	Christ's grand strategy Eph. 3:8-10	Churches set in order (household topos) 1 Timothy 3:14-16
Solid conversion: 1 & 2 Thess.	One mature church: equipping saints Ephesians 4:1-16	Solid senior eldership Titus 1:5-9 elders, deacons, women: 1 Timothy 3
"Now concerning..." List of schisms: 1 Corinthians	Household texts (family): Ephesians 5:22-6:9 Colossians 3:18-4:1	Household texts (family of families): 1 Timothy 5:1-6:2 Titus 2:1-21
Gathering Topos: Lord's Supper-Symposium: 1 Corinthians 11:17-14:40	Theology in culture: Philemon	Key, intergenerational apostolic leaders and teams
Perspective of ministry: conflicts without, fears within: 2 Cor. 2:14-7:5	Participation in progress of the gospel: Philippians' model (teams, finances)	Training process, stewardship responsibilities: 2 Timothy
Paul's complete treatise of the gospel: Romans	Network churches: hub (Ephesus) cluster (Lycus Valley) strategic (Philippi)	Leadership virtue/vice cluster lists: 1 Timothy 3:2-4, 8-12; 6:3-5; Titus 1:6-9; 3:3; 2 Timothy 3:2-5
"Pauline cycle" duly recognized gatherings		

# Galatians: New and Unestablished Believers

Galatians	New Believer	Unstable and Untaught Believer
<p>The Gospel Core</p> <p>Gospel Formula: 1 Cor. 15:1–6 Peter’s 5 sermons, Galatians</p> <p>No mixture of the Law back into the gospel; Conflict with Peter</p> <p>The gospel as a system of living</p> <p>Learning to live life in the Spirit,” a new mindset based on this new system, anticipating the transformation of the Spirit</p> <p>The importance of respecting leaders who are committed to teaching and guarding the truth.</p>	<p>Establishing a New Believer</p> <p>They must <b>learn</b> the complete core components of the gospel.</p> <p>They must <b>learn</b> to not mix in their past religious systems (works oriented), but embrace the complete gospel as presented by Paul in his early letters.</p> <p>They must <b>learn</b> a whole new system of living (didache)—the first principles of Christ.</p> <p>They <b>learn</b> to “live life in the Spirit,” a new mindset based on this new system, anticipating the transformation of the Spirit.</p> <p>They must <b>learn</b> to respect the authority of leadership responsible for teaching and guarding the gospel and fully support them.</p>	<p>Establishing Immature Believers</p> <p>They must <b>rethink</b> the gospel and identify missing or distorted components parts.</p> <p>They must begin <b>to rethink</b> their current distortions of the gospel, and begin relearning the complete gospel, as presented by Paul in his early letters.</p> <p>They must <b>relearn</b> a whole new system of living (didache)—the first principles of Christ.</p> <p>They must <b>learn</b> to “live life in the Spirit,” <b>rebuilding</b> a new mindset based on this system, anticipating the transforming of the Spirit</p> <p>They must <b>rethink</b> the significance of leadership responsible for teaching and guarding the gospel and the need to fully support them.</p>

# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process

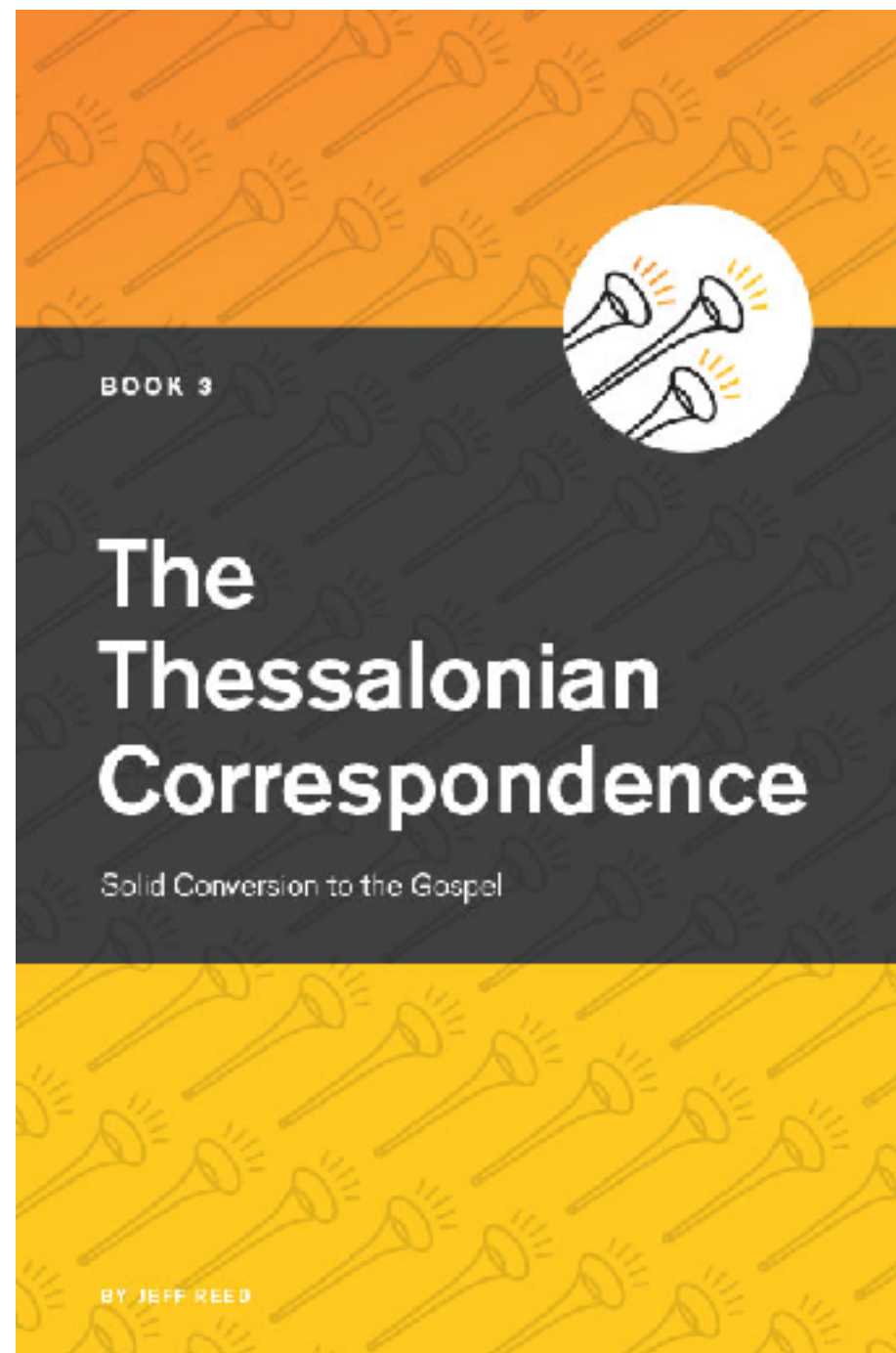


Book : Paul's Early Letters: The Thessalonians  
Conversion

- Session 1: Paul's Concern for the Thessalonians
- Session 2: Their Dramatic Conversion
- Session 3: Three Emerging Problems—Letter 1
- Session 4: Further Clarification—Letter 2
- Session 5: Solidifying Their Conversion
- Session 6: Reshaping Our Lives



# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process

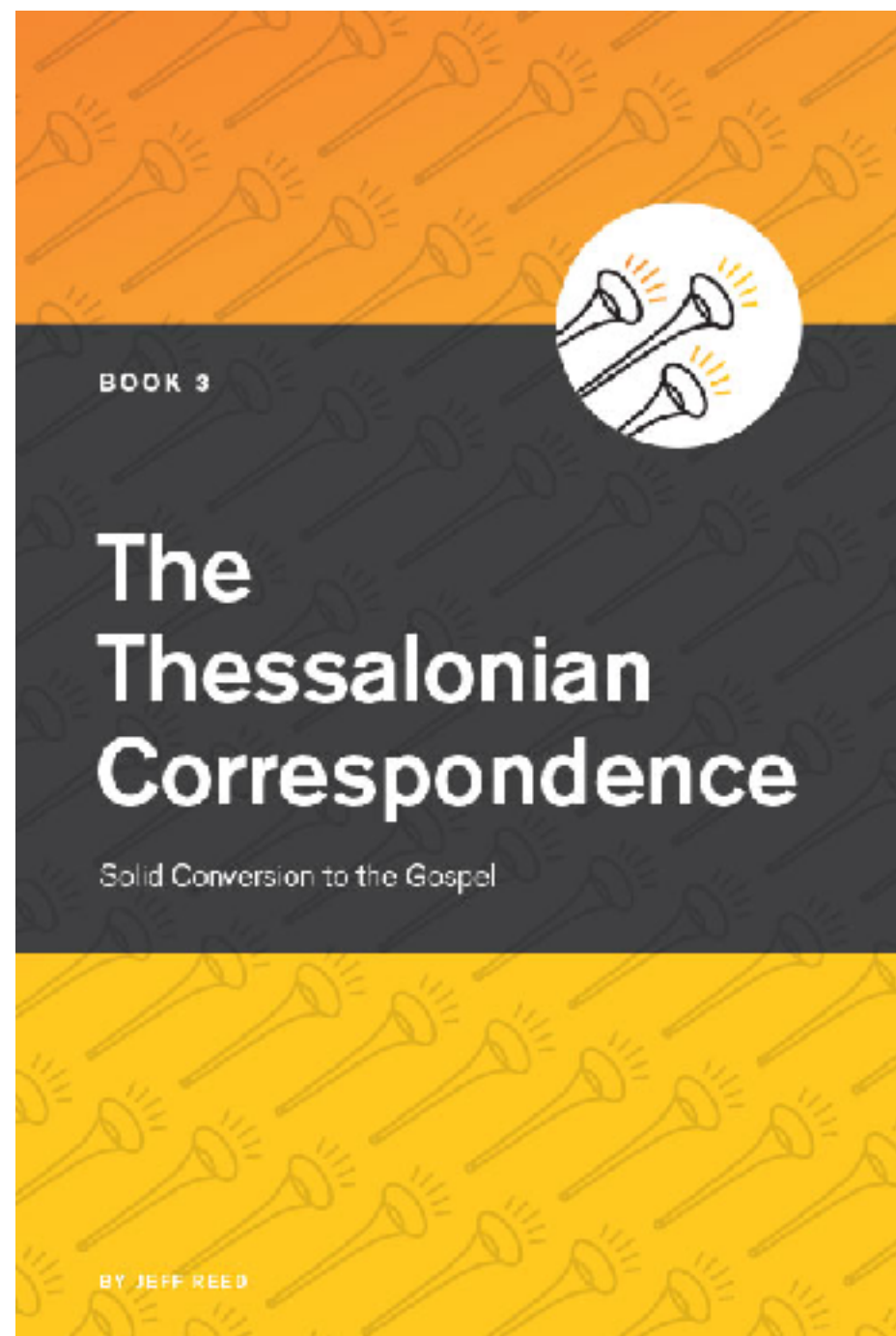


Solid and impacting conversion

Three things can clearly be seen in this passage

- Their conversion was dramatic. They received it and fully embraced it immediately.
- They quickly turned from their idols and adopted an entirely different worldview.
- They began proclaiming it everywhere, and so aggressively, that it became an example for all churches in Achaia and Macedonia.

# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process



Paul's concerns

Two key phrases:

“pulled off course” 1 Thessalonians 3:3

*sainesthai*—“to be moved, shaken, unsettled” (TDNT);

“emotionally disturbed” (LN)

“suddenly blown off course, or unsettled” 2 Thessalonians 2:2

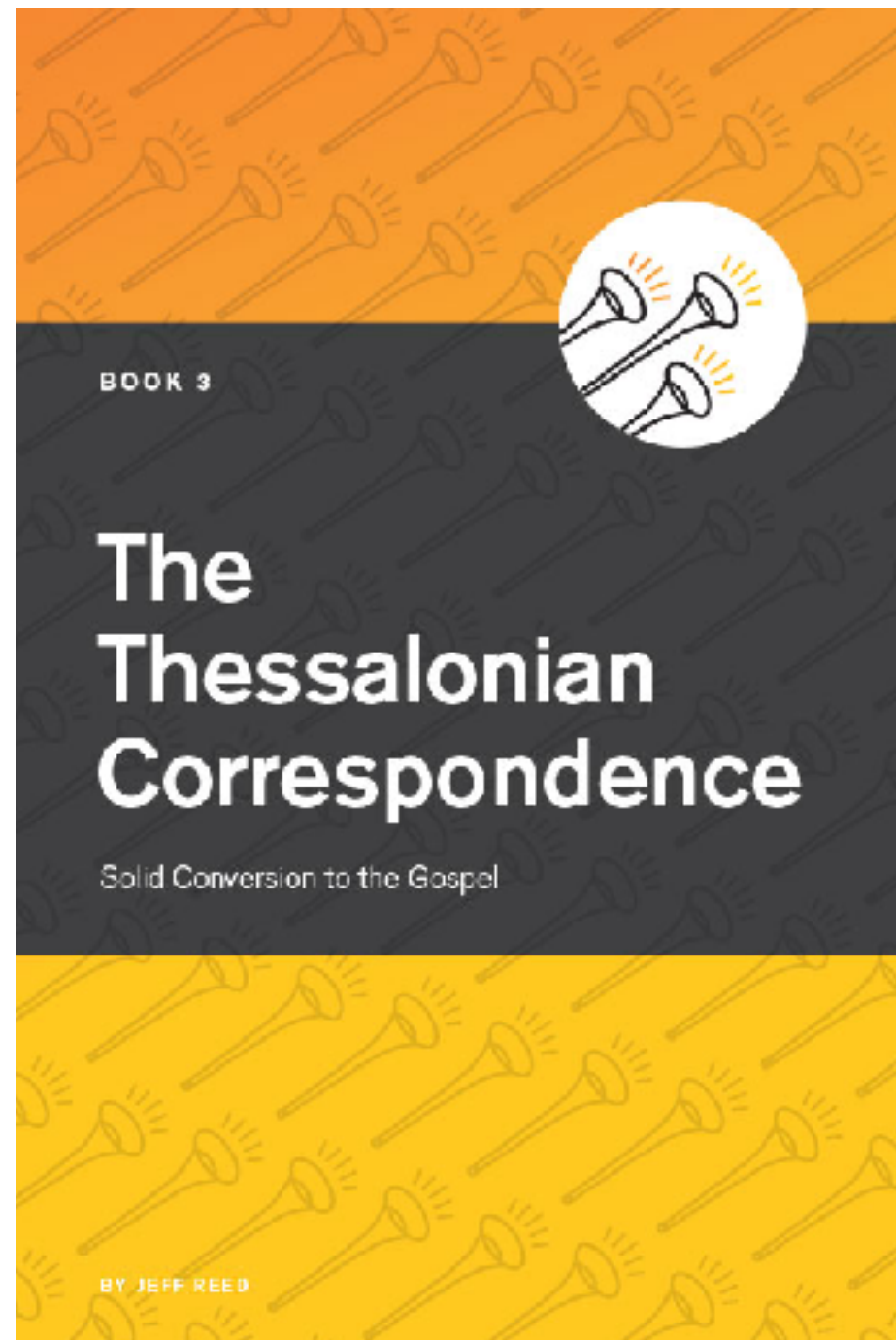
*saleuo*—“to rock” (LSJ) “from root to swell—dangerous waves at sea” (TDNT) “impending disaster, shaking of an

earthquake” (Little Kittle)

*throeo*—“to be in a state of fear” (LN); “sweating drops of blood”

(DBL)

# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process



*Conversion is*

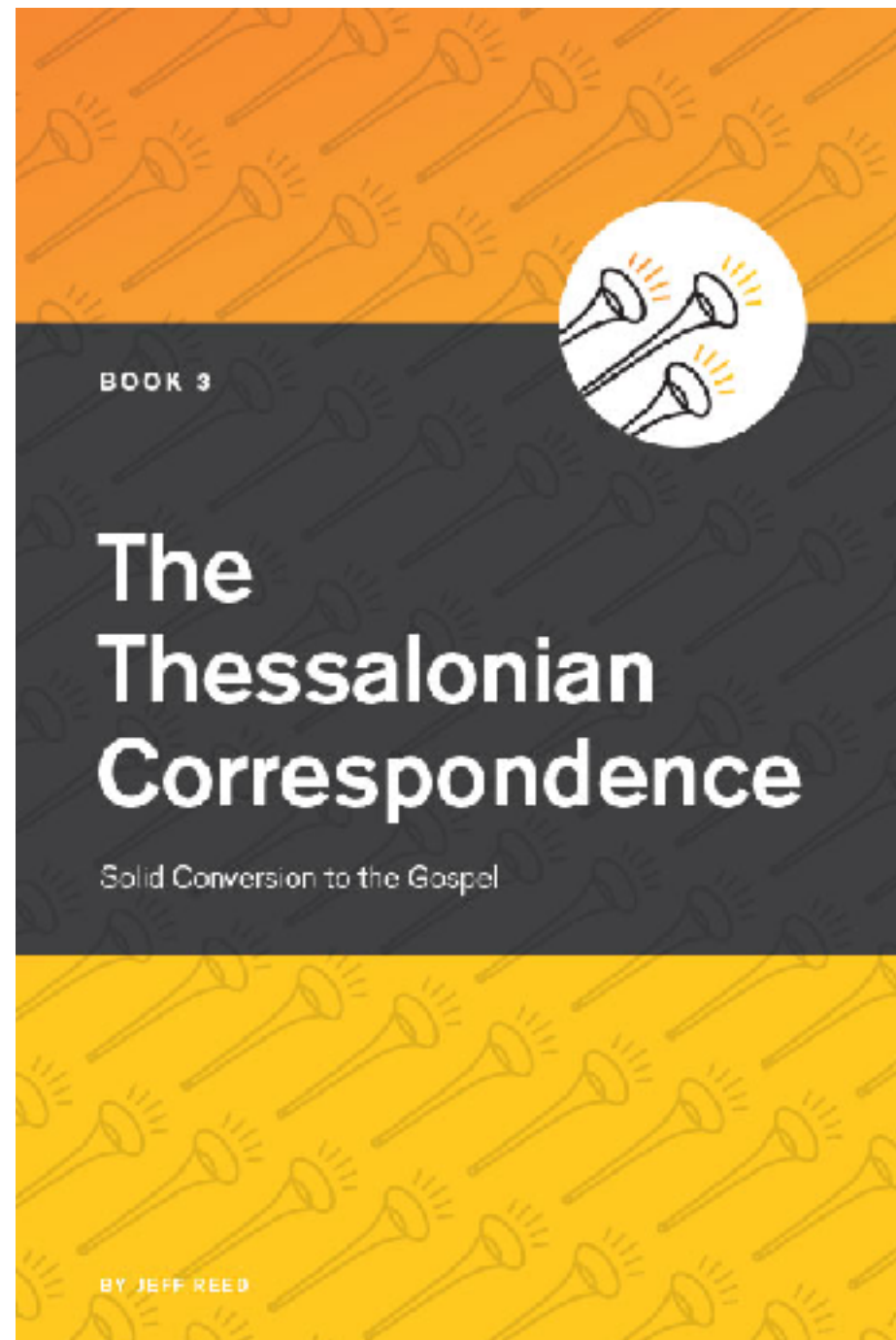
- *misunderstood* because it is removed from its literary context,
- *compartmentalized* because it is separated from the establishing process, and
- *reductionistic* because it is reduced to a moment-in-time event only.

Two new insights emerge:

1. The conversion process took place over a period of time—night and day while Paul supported himself—it was not a one time event.
2. The Thessalonians needed ongoing help—both the type a mother would give (nurturing) and a father would give (exhorting, imploring).

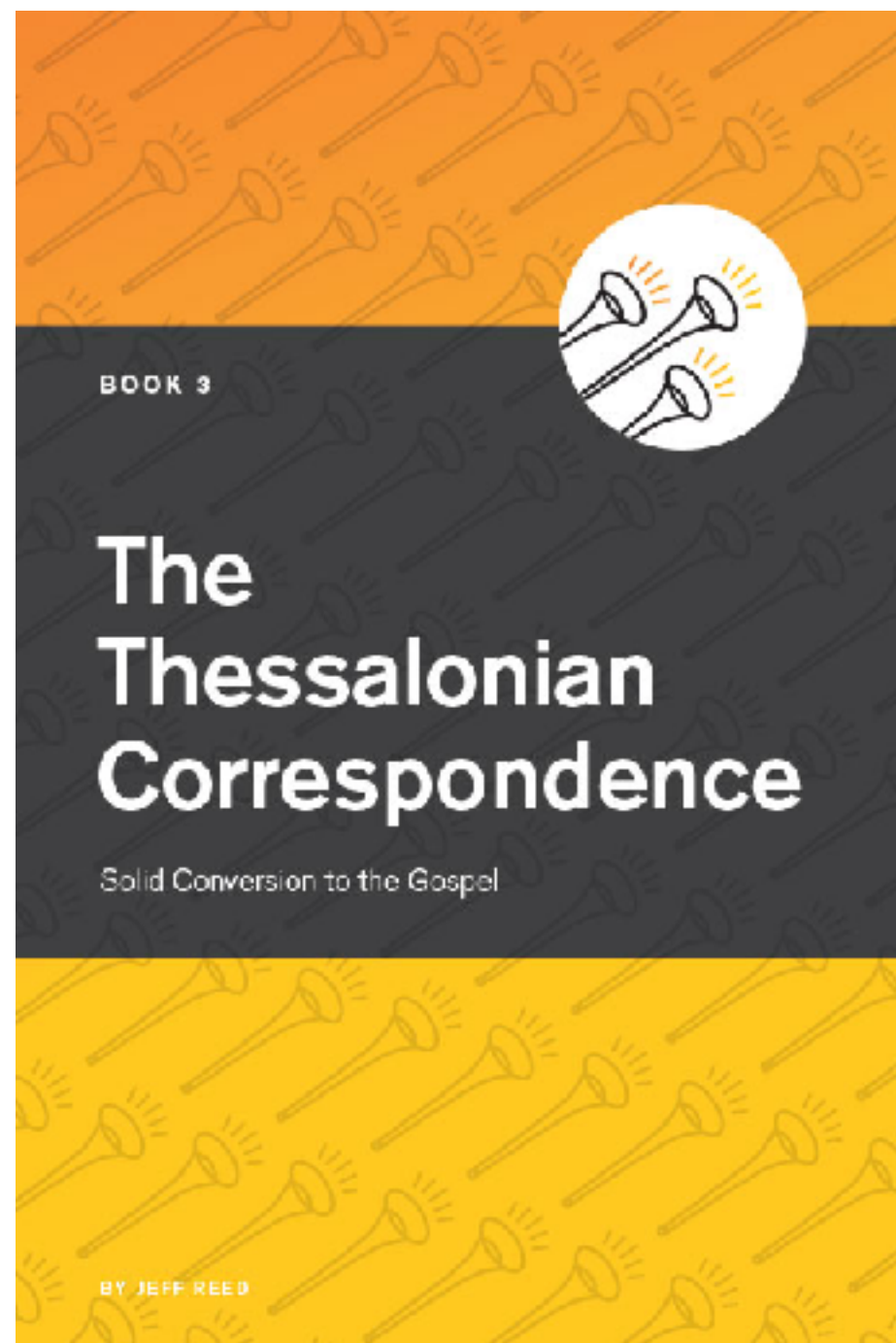
# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process

A complete conversion process looks like this:



1. There is an initial solid response, in which the gospel is fully embraced, which takes several weeks of exposure to the Word of God and results in those receiving the gospel embracing it and beginning to proclaim it themselves.
2. It must be immediately followed up by careful nurturing and exhorting.
3. It is then followed up in the context of a new community by leaders who know the Word—a balance of modal (local) and sodal (apostolic) leaders.

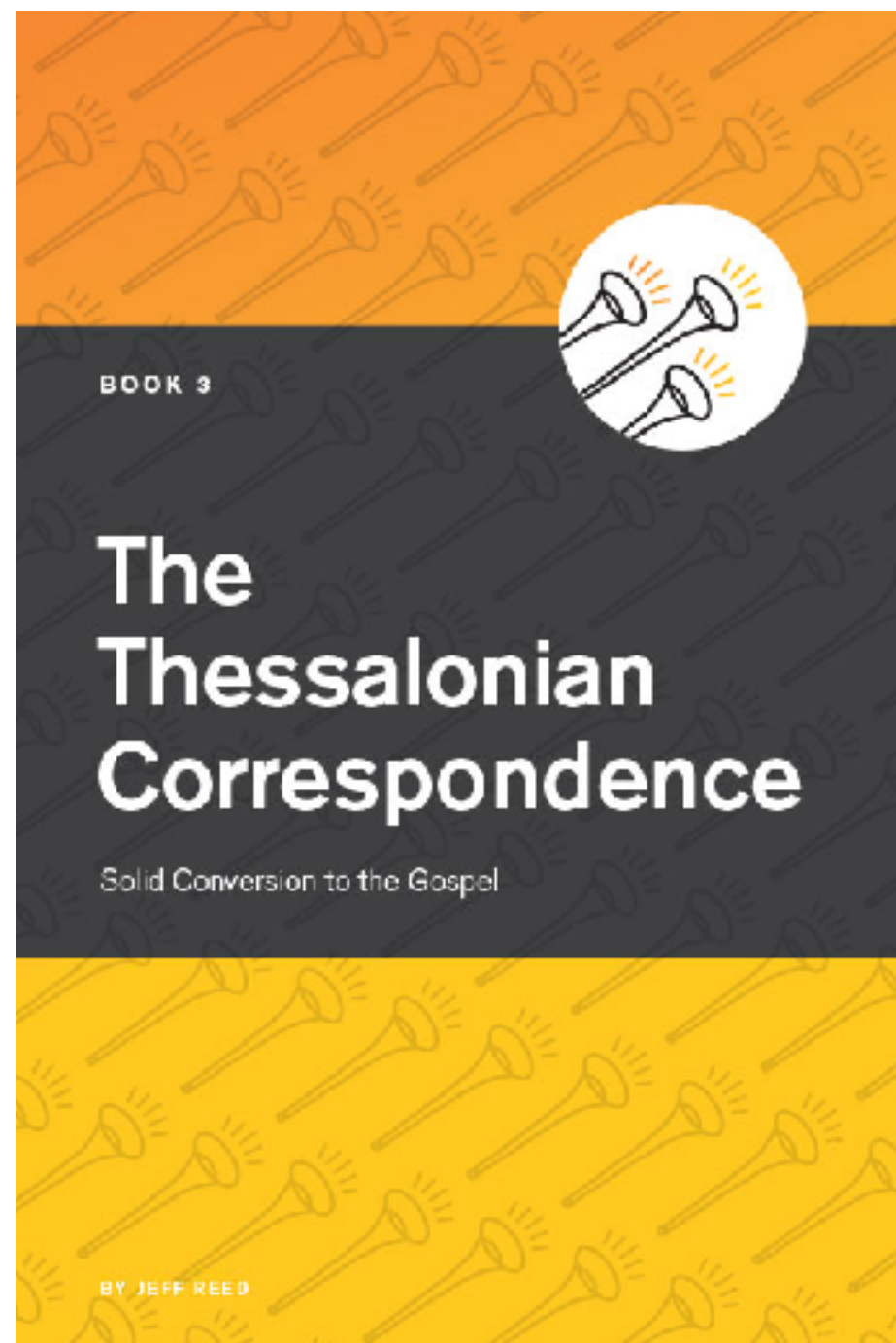
# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process



The Thessalonian churches were only 9 months old, but they needed to be challenged in 3 areas:

1. Changing their whole lifestyle from one of sexual impurity to living lives set apart to God.
2. Developing charitable concern for the whole family, demonstrated by their own hard work and generosity.
3. Fully embracing the gospel's (kerygma) claim of the return of Christ; not losing hope when loved ones die.

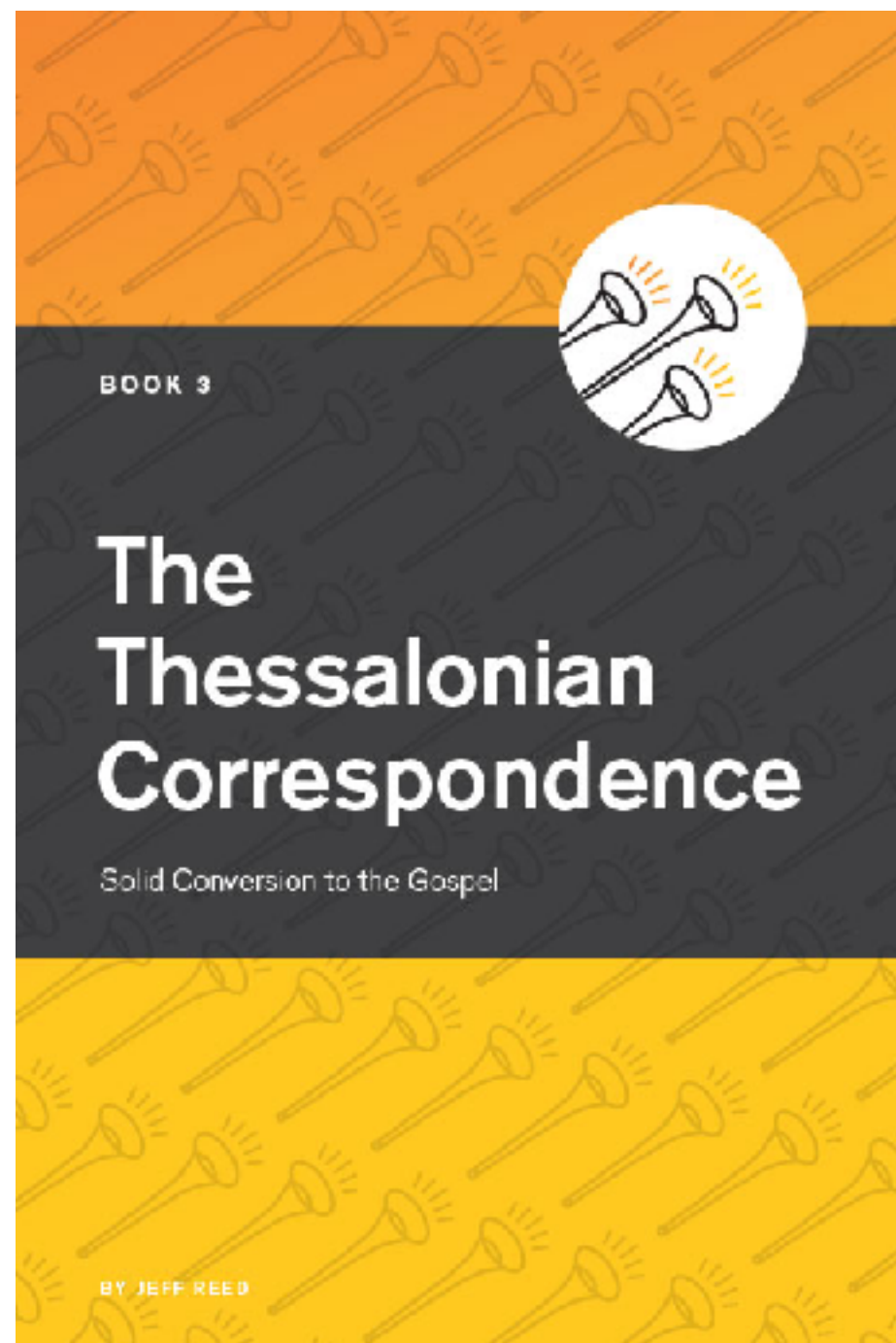
# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process



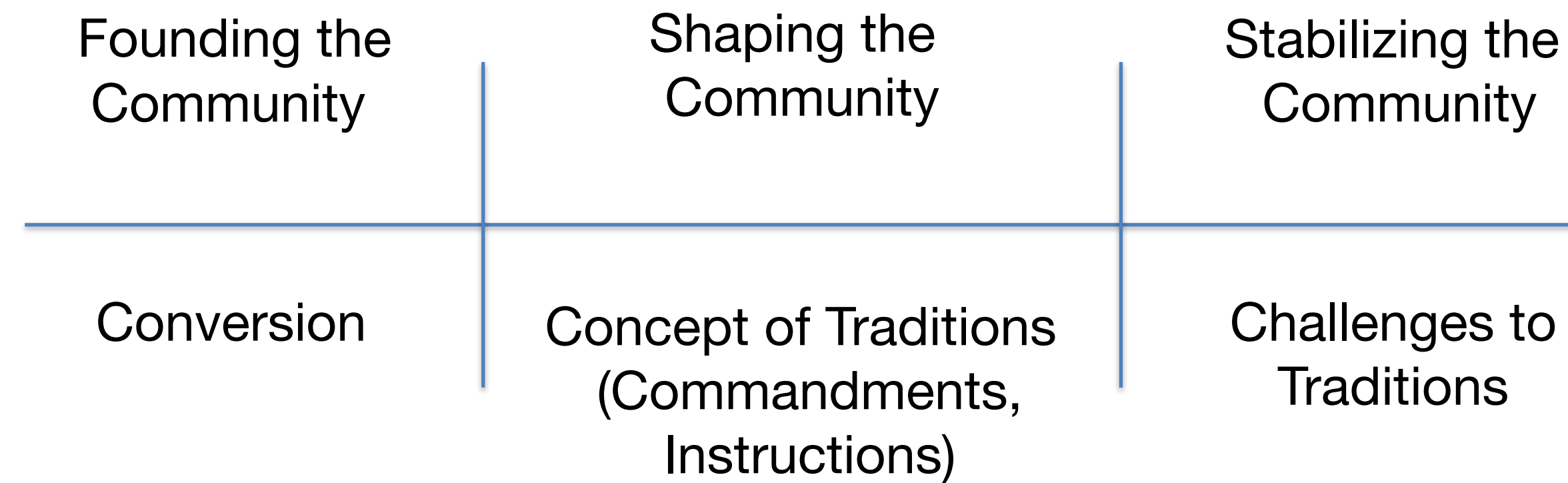
What did Paul understand about his own teaching and letters?

1. His teaching and letters are the “traditions” they were taught—the authoritative teaching.
2. All other teachings and letters are false; they should not be “unsettled” or “blown off course” by them. (2:2)

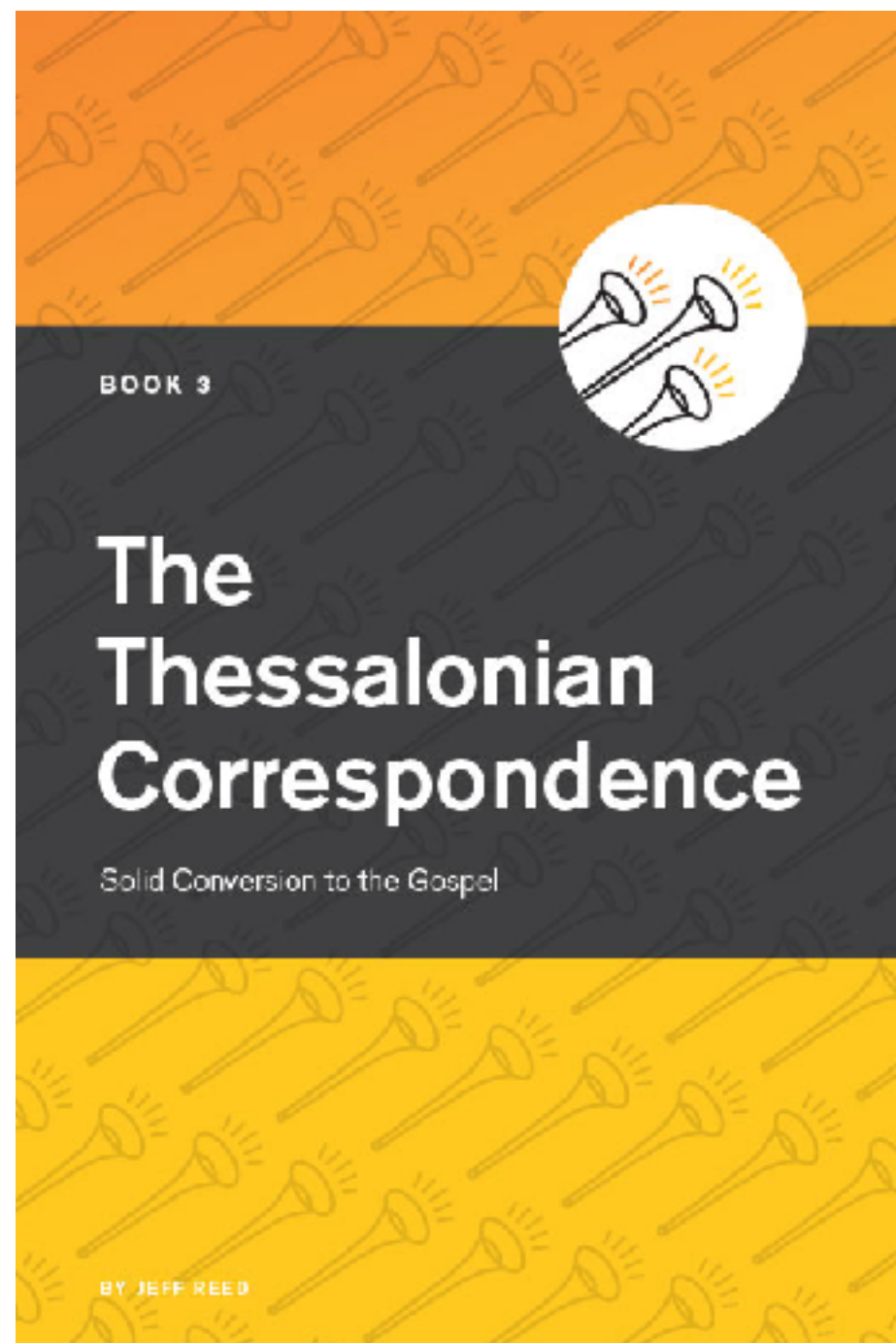
# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process



## Establishing the Thessalonian Community



# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process

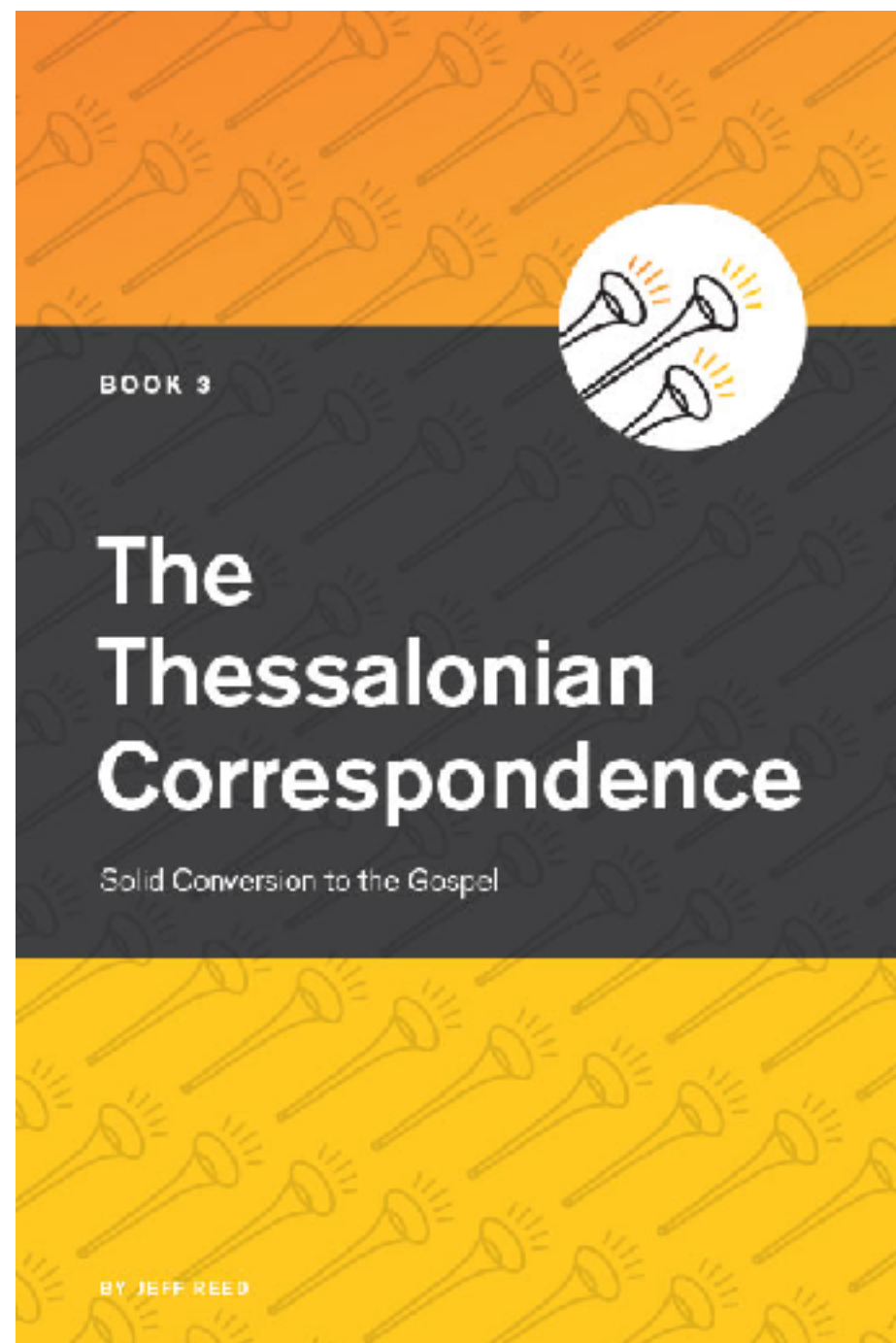


What does all this add up to?

1. Do not dismiss leaders. Acknowledge them and seek to clearly understand why they are doing what they are doing and respect them.
2. Recognize that the work they are doing will bring trouble on them—they will become tired, discouraged, and often want to give up.
3. There are leaders who are appointed to lead the churches—elders, deacons, and leading women; they are real positions and are expected to be honored.
4. One of their main jobs is to correct, confront, rebuke, and give strong advice.



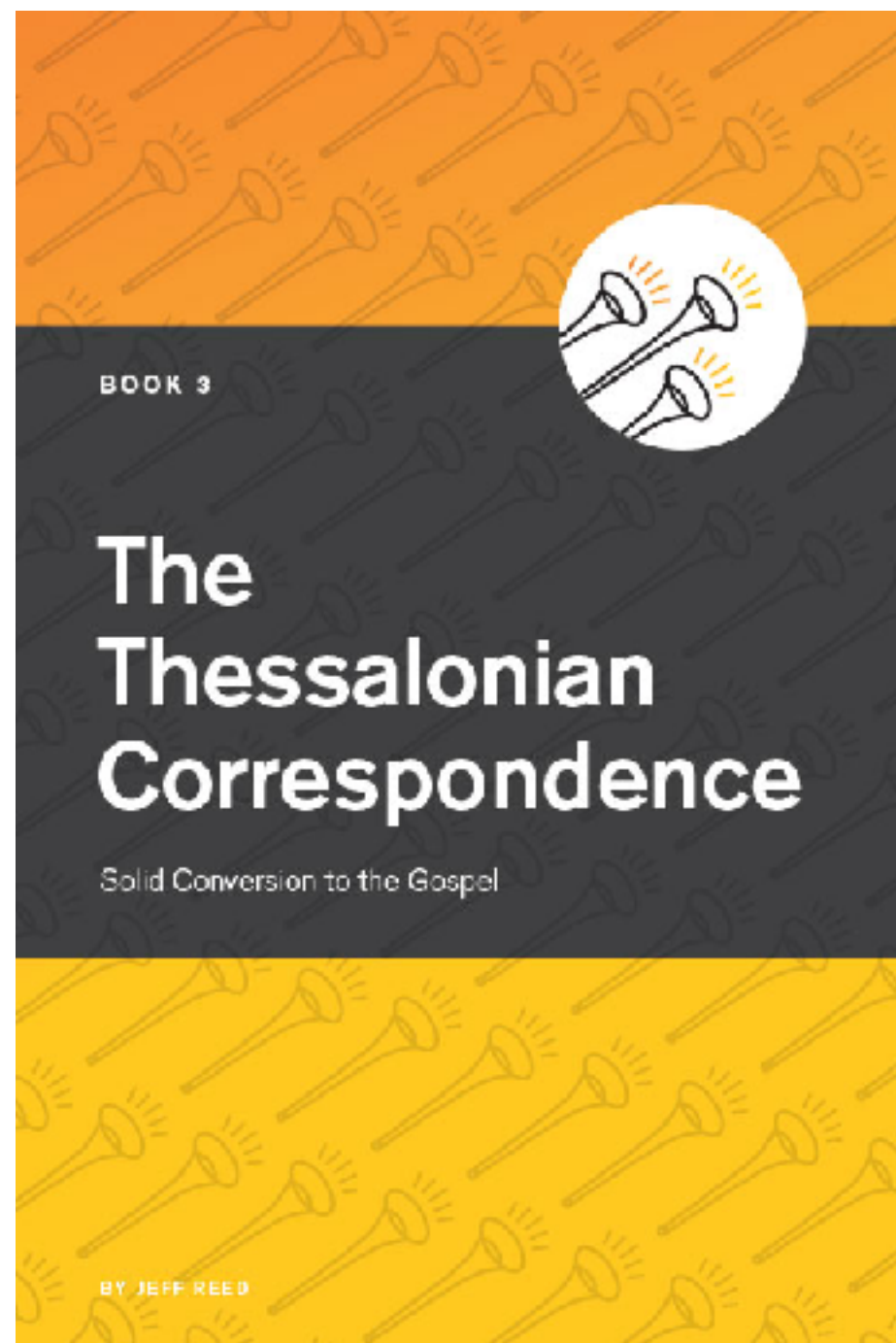
# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process



What does all this add up to? (cont.)

5. Regard and esteem them very highly because of the task or occupation they have undertaken.
6. Their role is key to living peacefully in community since community life includes living with each other in a unified manner, recognizing that we need to be patient with each other—from major demands and problems to our differences and imperfections.

# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process



Three categories of assistance are needed to stabilize churches in the gospel and the teaching that builds on it:

“warn those who step out of line” — *warn* = put in mind, sharply rebuke

“console the downcast” = put your arm around those with the life kicked out of them

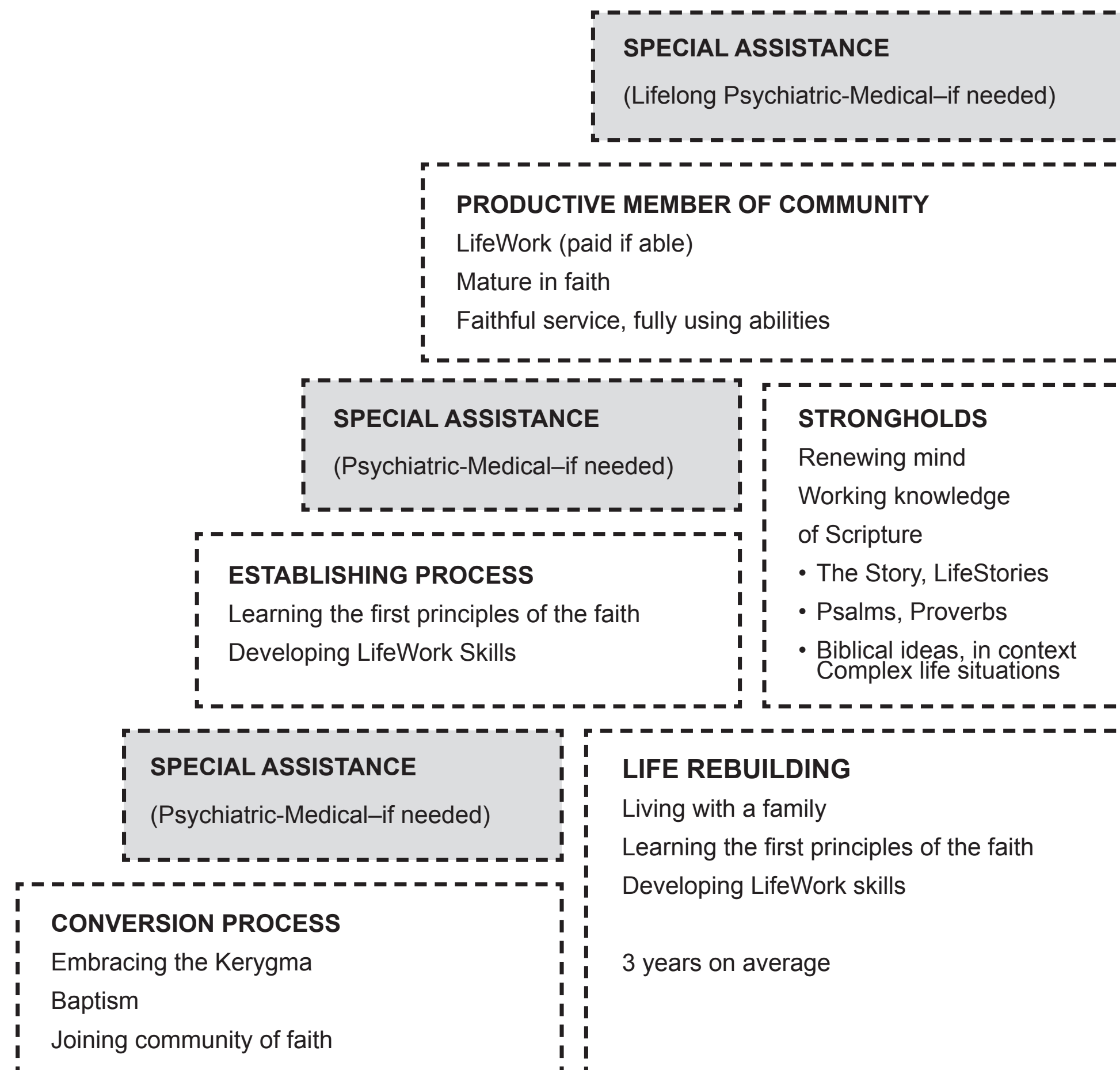
“help the weak” — be a support system to those without inner resources

# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process

Thessalonian Correspondence	New Believer	Unstable and Untaught Believer
<p>Solid Conversion Process</p> <p>A solid conversion process takes place over time: with clear understanding followed by nurturing and exhorting to their new life.</p> <p>New believers are susceptible to being pulled off course as early problems unsettle them.</p> <p>Authoritative traditions (teaching, commandments) to shape their lifestyle are key.</p> <p>Three types of believers need extra help: unruly, fainthearted, and weak.</p> <p>Leaders are key to giving the extra help needed for stability after conversion and must be respected.</p>	<p>Establishing a New Believer</p> <p>New believers will need nurturing of a mother and exhorting of a father to solidify the conversion process.</p> <p>We must watch for early problems that surface to pull a new believers off course and walk them through them nurturing/exhorting.</p> <p>New believers need to learn the concept of apostolic traditions as authoritative and commit to follow them as a lifestyle.</p> <p>We must identify new believers who need special help: the unruly, the fainthearted, or the weak, giving individual shepherding.</p> <p>New believers must be taught to hold leaders in high regard respecting their task of stabilizing believers and churches.</p>	<p>Establishing Immature Believers</p> <p>Immature believers will often need to revisit their conversion to solidify a weak foundation also requiring the nurturing/exhorting process.</p> <p>We must identify early problems that were not dealt with in the conversion process and walk them through them nurturing and exhorting.</p> <p>Immature believers need to learn the concept of apostolic traditions as authoritative and commit to follow they as a lifestyle.</p> <p>We must identify immature believers who need special help: the unruly, the fainthearted, or the weak, giving individual shepherding.</p> <p>Immature believers must learn the importance of leaders in helping them through the maturing process and hold them in high regard.</p>

# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process

## PASTORAL CARE TAXONOMY

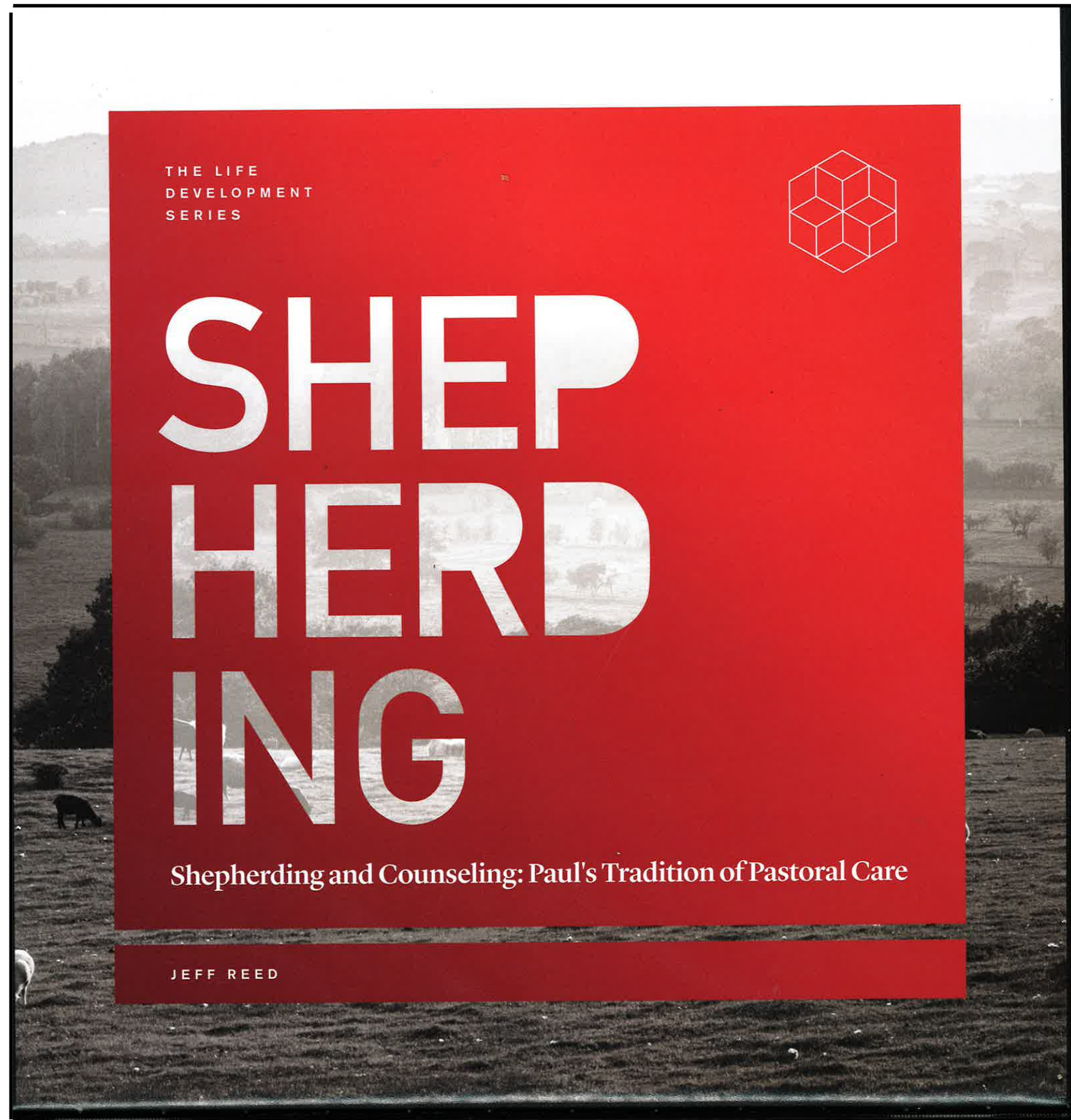


Based on the previous chart, all believers need to be taught correctly or they will be unstable (unestablished) in the faith.

Both new and unestablished may have significant strongholds in their lives that need additional shepherding and counseling to carefully lay solid foundations in the gospel.

Both need to rethink their philosophy and principles of life, which means both need careful foundations laid in the gospel, which Paul's early letters focus on.

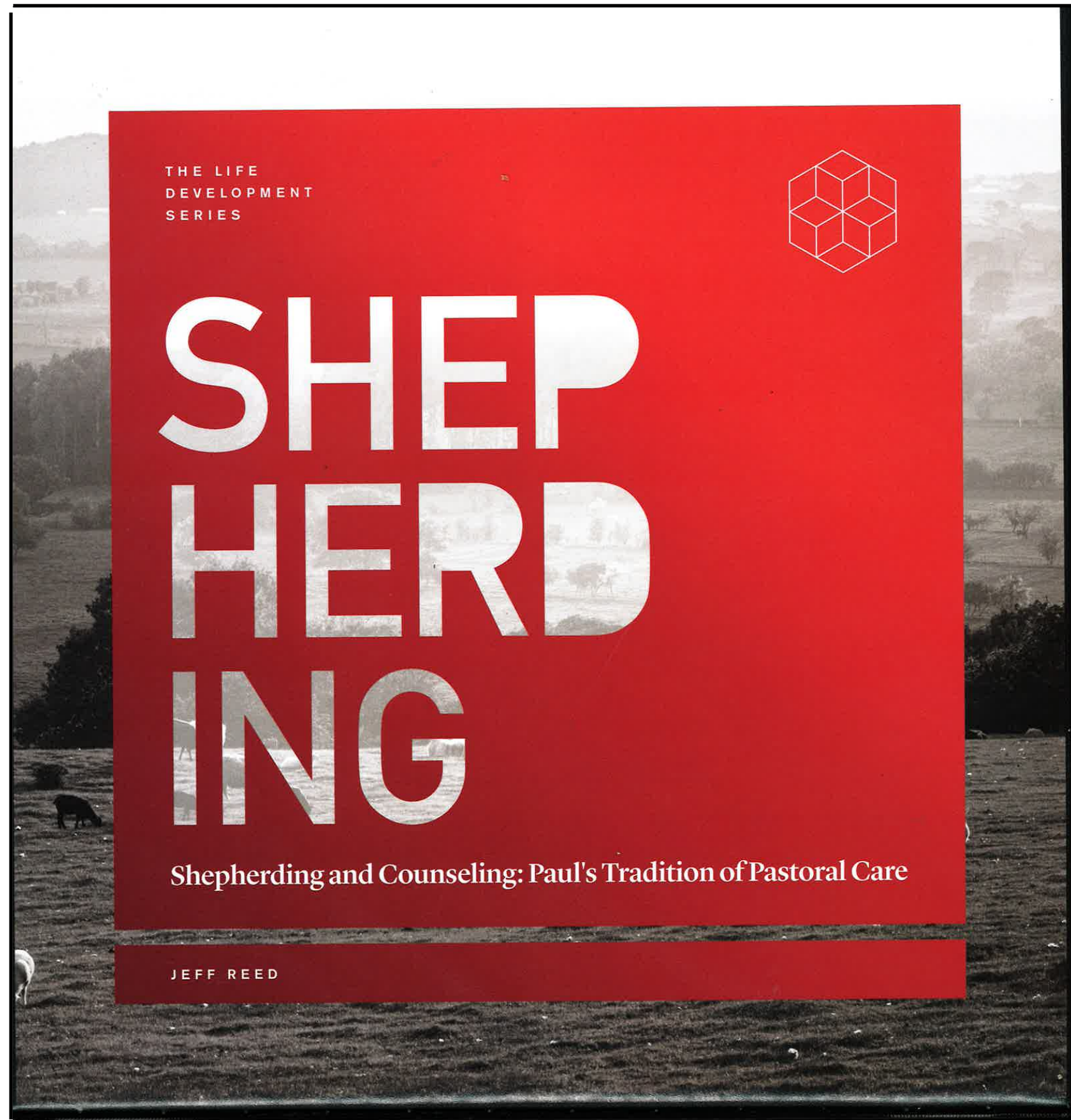
# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process



Shepherding and Counseling—Paul's Tradition of Pastoral Care

- Session 1: The Pastoral Care Taxonomy: Schema and Principles
- Session 2: The Pastoral Care Taxonomy: Processes and Practices
- Session 3: MicroSkills Hierarchy
- Session 4: Major Life Development Tools
- Session 5: Mastering the Scriptures
- Session 6: Medical, Legal, and Governmental Assistance
- Session 7: ReBuild Programs
- Session 8: Personal Competency Portfolio

# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process



## Launching the Counseling Shepherding Paradigm

Senior elders and wives discussions:

9 evening discussions at Reeds' lounge. Dinner followed by a 2-hour discussion. Completed in 2023.

Executive Education Program: Shepherding and Counseling:

3½ hours, 9 Monday nights, once a month. Completed in 2024. For senior elders and wives.

Senior elder cluster leaders' discussions:

Each senior elder will lead a 2-hour similar discussion with church leaders in their church cluster teams.

# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process

Shepherding and Counseling Goals After 2 Years:

1. All of our leaders, senior elders, and their leadership teams will be fully established in the gospel and capable of fully establishing both new believers and unstable/untaught believers fully in the gospel.
2. The starting point of all of our shepherding and counseling, whether informal counseling or one another to formal counseling by senior elders and their leadership teams, will be skill in establishing new and unstable/untaught believers fully in the gospel.
3. All new believers and unstable/untaught believers in our churches, in formal counseling or in ReBuild (our 3-year rebuilding process) will be established in the gospel by skilled leaders of our churches, as the first phase of their development process.
4. All of our leaders will take very seriously mastering Paul's Early Letters using the MTS booklets skillfully.

# The New Perspective on Paul



## The Early Letters

Book 1: Paul's Early Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches in the Gospel

Book 2: Galatians: So Quickly Leaving the Gospel

Book 3: The Thessalonian Correspondence: Solid Conversion to the Gospel

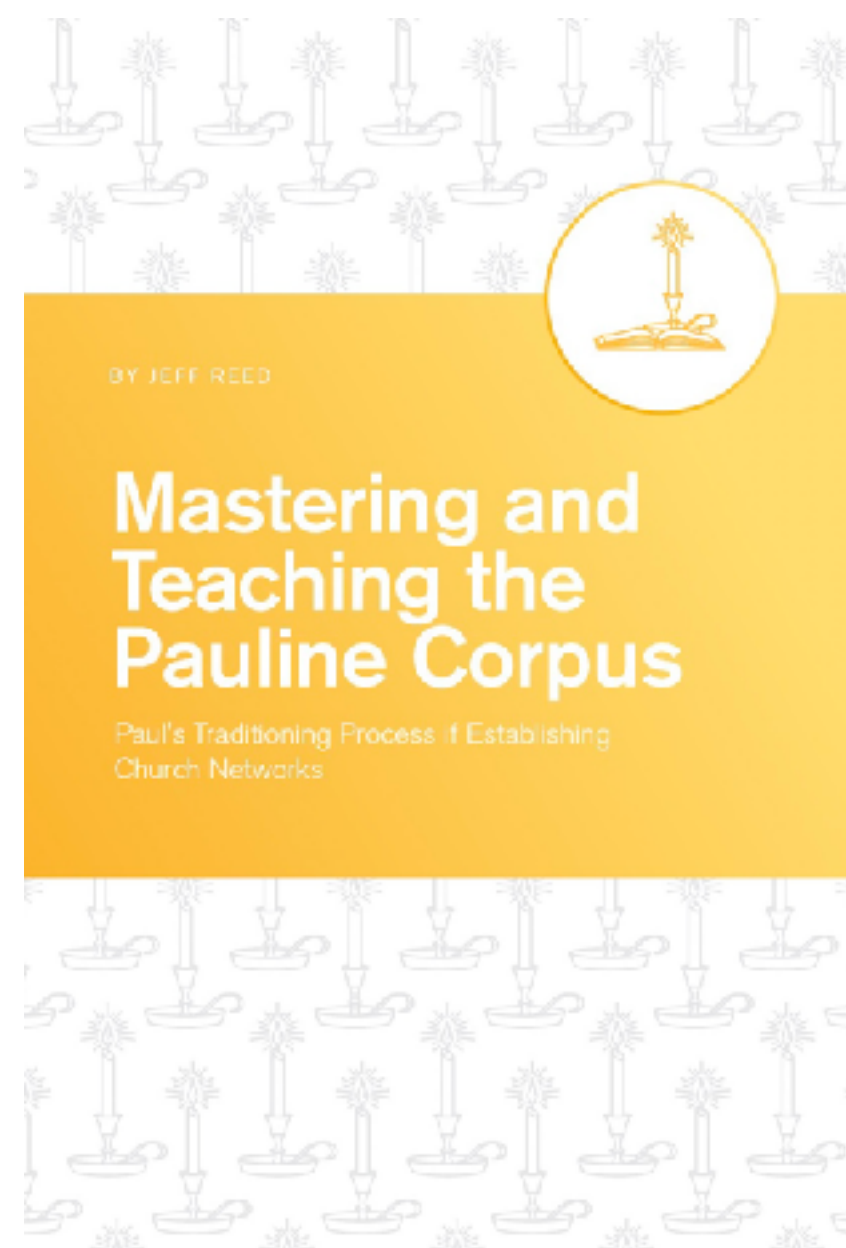
Book 4: The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

Book 5: The Corinthian Letters: Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches

Book 6: Romans: Complete Treatise of Paul's Gospel



# The New Perspective on Paul



## Teaching Mastering the Scriptures

Session 1: The New Perspective on Paul: Rethinking Western Hermeneutics

Session 2: Canonical Structure and the New Perspective on Paul

Session 3: Paul's Traditioning Process: Schematic for Setting Churches in Order

Session 4: Paul's Process of Doing Theology in Culture Within the Grand Strategy Schema

Session 5: Paul's Letters as Tools for Building Complex Apostolic Networks

Session 6: The New Perspective on Paul and the Gospels

Session 7: Mastering, Teaching, and Using the Mastering the Scriptures

# Thessalonians: Solid Conversion Process

Issue: Nurturing a Solid Conversion Process

1. In what sense is conversion a process? What all is involved in a solid conversion process?
2. What sorts of problems are most likely to blow a new believer off course during the conversion process? Why is learning the importance of apostolic traditions key to solving these early problems?
3. What are the types of individuals needing special help in the conversion process? Why is it important to handle these three types differently?
4. During the conversion process, why is it critical that new believers and immature believers who are resisting their conversion process learn to hold leaders of their church or churches in high regard?