



HomeGroup **LEADER** Discussion Questions

Week 1: Apr 10th-16th

THIS IS A "MARK-IT-UP" SERIES, MEANING THAT WE ENCOURAGE NOTE-TAKING AS WE TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE TEXT OF 1 THESSALONIANS. ESV COPIES OF 1 THESSALONIANS THAT ARE DESIGNED FOR TAKING NOTES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE CHURCH IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COPY.

PICK 2-4 QUESTIONS FROM BELOW THAT YOU THINK WILL HELP YOUR DISCUSSION.

When faced with a problem, isn't it nice to be able to watch others tackle the same kind of issue? Isn't it helpful to watch that video that demonstrates how to complete the task or overcome the obstacle? This new series from 1 Thessalonians is an opportunity to learn from others who have gone before us. In its day, the church in Thessalonica served as an example (see v. 1:7), but we shouldn't be surprised that they too were beneficiaries of others who had first set an example for them. We all need guides to influence us, so we pray this series will set an example for us so we might do the same for others.

Main Texts: Acts 17:1-10 and 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3

Connect

1. What or whom has been one of the greatest influences on your life? What happened that made an influence on you?

Thomas begins with this question at the start of the sermon. It's especially relevant from 1 Thess 1:7, "...so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia."

2. What did you find significant about the sermon or passage? What questions or thoughts did it raise for you?

Learn

3. For background, read Acts 17:1-10. How would you characterize or describe Paul and Silas' time in Thessalonica?

4. How would you expect the church in Thessalonica to be impacted by the kind of opposition described in Acts 17? Why?

The question assumes that most of us would not think that hostility to the gospel is the kind of environment where the “seeds” of the gospel would grow well. We would likely prefer a setting where the gospel is widely embraced or at least welcomed as one among many options of belief.

5. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3. Why do you think Paul, Silvanus (i.e., Silas), and Timothy begin by talking about their prayers for the Thessalonians? Why is prayer so important in their situation?

Prayer is powerful in Paul’s mind and practice. It isn’t just a nice thing to do but is essential as a part of his ministry. He can’t be in Thessalonica physically, but knows that prayer is his means of continuing to minister in their lives and circumstances. It could be helpful to connect this idea of prayer to the series we just came out of, *Battle Ready*. The Thessalonians were in difficult circumstances but Paul knows the core nature of their opposition and struggle is spiritual, not physical. (Eph 6:10-20)

6. Verse 3 lists three reasons for thanksgiving over the Thessalonian church: their “work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” Why do you think these were so essential for the church there?

Faith, hope, and love are the core expressions or forms of grace for believers. Paul is commending the church because he sees these demonstrated in their lives, likely based on the report he heard back from Timothy (see 3:6-8).

Apply

7. The situation in Thessalonica may have seemed bleak, given what we read in Acts 17! Even so, we see that the church grew. How could this encourage us at Calvary when/if we feel opposed by our circumstances?

It’s important to realize that the opposition we face today is very different from what the Thessalonians faced, but that doesn’t mean we can’t learn from them. The church there grew in hardship and God can do the same for us. Opposition is not a sign that we’re doing it wrong or that God is not faithful. Quite the contrary!

8. In the online sermon, Pastor Thomas mentioned the co-laborer relationship of Paul and Silas and the mentor-mentee relationship of Paul and Timothy. Think about your life. Do you have these kind of relationships with others? If you don’t, what one step could you take to move closer to having them?

Calvary has mentoring programs. If you have questions, reach out to Perry Marshall in Boulder, Jay Ewing or Kathy Taylor in Erie, or Matthew Michaud in Thornton.

9. *Faith, hope, and love* are repeated “marks” or traits of Christians and the church in the New Testament. How well do you think we as a church live these out and exhibit them to our surrounding communities? Explain your answer.

Going Deeper

As an epistle, we're reading somebody else's mail when we read 1 Thessalonians! One of the most helpful ways to become familiar with it and to interpret it correctly in its context is to read it straight through—a reasonable task for such a short letter. This week, read it through in one sitting at least three times. Make note of what stands out, what questions come up in your mind, and what you think the purpose of the letter is. If you have access to one, read the introduction from a good study Bible as well (The ESV Study Bible and the NIV Study Bible are both good options).

Remember, this is a “mark it up” series. It would be great to have some well-worn pages in your Bible by the end of this series!