

First Thessalonians

MARK IT UP

HomeGroup **LEADER** Discussion Questions

Week 8: May 29th-June 4th

Special note: This is the final week of our series in 1 Thessalonians and the final week of discussion questions until the fall. We encourage our HomeGroups to break from meeting weekly over the summer so everyone can have a time of rest and reinvigoration before the fall. Even so, groups are encouraged to make plans to stay in touch over the summer.

LEADERS, THANK YOU FOR CARING FOR, FACILITATING, AND LOVING YOUR GROUP DURING THIS HOMEGROUP SEASON! YOU HAVE PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE AT CALVARY SINCE LAST FALL. WE PRAY YOU HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!

Main Texts: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

Connect

1. What has been the highlight of this sermon series for you? What have you learned or been reminded of?
2. What did you you find significant about the sermon or passage? What questions or thoughts did it raise for you?

Learn

3. After reading the passage, what do you think the relationship is between the call to respect leaders and being at peace among themselves (vv. 12-13)?

Think of any environment you've been a part of where the leaders were not respected—in a school, a workplace, a team, a family. These are situations of disunity, chaos, cynicism, and even anarchy. Respect for leaders is a key part of having peace.

4. Paul tells the Thessalonians in verse 15 to not repay evil but “always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.” From what you know about the letter (assuming you've been paying attention!), why could this have been especially challenging to them?

One relevant verse here could be 1 Thess 2:14, which tells us that the Thessalonians had faced opposition from their own countrymen. We can imagine how difficult it could have been for the church to carry this out toward even its enemies.

5. What characteristics of God do you see Paul emphasizing in verses 23-24? How might these have been comforting to the Thessalonians?

God is the source of peace and He is faithful. In addition, we might also say from these verses that He is the one who sanctifies (i.e., makes holy—sets apart those He has saved). He is the one returning, and He is trustworthy.

6. Extra Credit: What in the world is a “holy kiss” greeting (v. 26)? :)

This is a great reminder of something that’s easy to overlook when we read the Bible—that, while it was written *for* us, it was not written *to* us! This is a strange command to us, but was a normal form of greeting in Paul’s setting. It may suggest a worship setting, where this letter would have been read in front of all of the congregation. Some ancient writings around AD 150 indicate that there was a normal order of service where there was prayer, followed by this “holy kiss” greeting, then followed by taking the Lord’s Supper. It was a greeting meant to help instill a sense of love and unity within the church. (F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, vol. 45 of Word Biblical Commentary. Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 133-134.)

Apply

7. Which of Paul’s commands in this passage do you find to be most challenging? Why?

8. What kind of sacrifices or costs might be required for us to carry out the commands of verse 14: “admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all”?

First off, we have to take the time to notice what others around us need. Each of these steps can require an investment of time, energy, and love.

9. As you think about all that Paul commands (with the Holy Spirit’s inspiration), what difference does it make to you that “the God of peace himself” sanctifies us and that “He who calls [us] is faithful; he will surely do it”?