

Small Group Bible Study: 2 Thessalonians

Week 1: Opening Question – Have you ever been around someone who just “oozes” Jesus? What defines them and why are they different?

Paul follows up his 1st letter to the Thessalonians to continue his encouragement of them and point out some doctrinal errors that have risen up in the community. Here in the 1st chapter he really focuses on the journey that we are all on and that there is nothing “static” about our faith and love.

Read 2 Thessalonians 1

Questions:

- 1- Describe the relationship Paul has with the Thessalonians in verses 1-4.
 - a. What key things is he encouraging them on?
 - b. What does it say about the Thessalonians?
 - c. Why is it important that he references a continued growth in love and faith?
 - i. How have you seen growth in your own life? How did that growth happen? What some times stops you from taking the next step?
 - d. In verse 4 Paul talks about boasting. Who or what is he boasting about?
 - i. In his affirmation of the Thessalonians he points everything back to who? Why?
- 2- How do we encourage each other without getting arrogant?
- 3- What does Paul say about the suffering that the Thessalonians are receiving?
 - a. What do we take away from Paul’s thoughts on suffering? How does it affect how you view suffering in your own life?
- 4- How do we know that God’s judgment is just?
 - a. How does Paul’s description of God’s just judgment bring us comfort?
- 5- In verses 5-10 Paul describes a pretty terrible scene. What should Christians feel about this?
 - a. How should this change our thoughts towards unbelieving friends or family?
- 6- What do you do with the question “Why didn’t God do something?”
- 7- In v12, Paul states the purpose of life. What is it?
 - a. How is this reflected in you?
 - b. Is there any area of your life that needs to change significantly so you can begin to chase after the right things?

Prayer Focus: For those who are suffering and pray for their perseverance and yours as well

Week 2: Opening Thought- Do you ever think about how the world end? Does it worry you at all?

A common worry today revolves around all of the violence we see in this world. Could someone attack again? Will nuclear war break out? When will all of the wars stop? False teachers will use these fears and thoughts to twist scripture for their own financial gain. The Thessalonians were facing the same type of teaching in their day and Paul responds back to them here in chapter 2.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2

- 1- Go back and read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:3 and detail what Paul says the coming of Jesus will be like. What details has he added here in chapter 2.
 - a. After going through all the little ways Paul describes what is going to happen, do you see any of these things at work today?
 - b. When someone asks, "Is the world coming to an end soon?" our response is always gracious. No one really knows and many over hundreds and hundreds of years have thought the end was around the corner. Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. Does it matter? (go back and read 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11)
- 2- How does Paul describe the "Man of Lawlessness?"
- 3- How do False Teachers use End Times teachings to seduce and fool listeners?
 - a. Why do we always approach End Times teachings with humility?
 - b. Is it possible Paul is describing an AntiChrist in general terms as well as possibly describing specific person? Why is the answer to this important?
- 4- How will the Lawless one deceive people?
- 5- In verses 9-12, why will some people be ready to be deceived?
- 6- How does Jesus respond?
 - a. Why is his response important to us?
- 7- Why is Paul encouraging them in verses 13-17? What makes him so sure of everything?
- 8- How do the Thessalonians get a solid foundation?
- 9- What areas in our world today seem out of control (both local and global)? What are some ideas to help change that?

Prayer Focus: God's power, his holiness, his knowledge of everything

Week 3: Opening Thought - Are there areas in your life that you feel lazy? How has that effected you?

Paul is deeply concerned about the laziness of some of the believers in this community. Some of them have stopped working and their laziness has started to not only slow down the spreading of the gospel but it has made the gospel message more shallow to non believers. Paul's response is a direct rebuke against those who aren't willing to work, willing to be aggressive, or take responsibility for their own actions.

Read 2 Thessalonians 3

Questions:

- 1- What is Paul asking for when he requests that they pray for them?
 - a. Are these things we should be praying for?

- 2- Paul frequently points back to what he is confident about. What does he list out in verses 3-5.

- 3- In verse 4 Paul begins to talk about obedience again. How does obedience increase our faith, love, hope and prevent us from getting lazy?
 - a. How does that build our foundation?

- 4- God desires that churches grow in numbers, which means the gospel is reaching people, and in obedience, which means the gospel is penetrating the hearts of the listeners and digging deep into the core of who they are. Why is it important to remember these two things in everything that we do?

- 5- Paul comes back to prayer all of the time. And in most cases it is all about prayer for one another. What effect does praying for someone else have? What about if you are in a disagreement with the other person or is someone who you just don't like?

- 6- In verses 6-15 Paul's tone changes. Why?
 - a. What are all of the things he is addressing?

- 7- How does Paul say the church should react to those who are lazy or sinning?
 - a. Do you see this type of reaction a lot? Why or why not?
 - b. What is the importance of gracious accountability?

- 8- In v 14 it says to not have a close relationship (some translations say "have nothing to do with") with those who don't obey. When he writes "so they may be ashamed" he is saying that it should bring them to repentance. But in verse 15 he says the tone that we should have. How does Paul describe how we should address the person?
 - a. Why is this important?
 - b. Do you ever see people holding this kind of standard?

- 9- How can you help others who may lean towards or are flat out lazy?

Prayer focus: Strength and perseverance in what you do, staying away from laziness