

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

Following Jesus While Waiting for His Return

PART 1: HOW PEOPLE CHANGE

For people to truly change, they have to be in an environment where they feel unconditionally loved and fully accepted. Throughout the letters of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, we see the impact Paul had on the people in Thessalonica by giving his heart to them.

WIN

To be inspired to give our hearts away to others

CONNECT

Take a few minutes to discuss the following questions as a group:

1. Has anyone ever given you their whole heart, where you never felt judged while at the same time never felt like that person needed your approval... where you felt safe to question, make mistakes, and change with no fear of being looked down upon... no fear of not being fully accepted? If someone came to mind, who was it? What was their impact on your life?
2. How much of 1 and 2 Thessalonians have you read? Will this be your first time through these letters? How do you feel about beginning this three-week study?

LEARN

Before watching the video together and discussing the questions provided, we suggest taking a few moments to pray. Here's a simple prayer you can use:

Heavenly Father, Thank you for sending your Son, who gave his life and heart to us so that we could know you. Help us to follow his example by giving our lives away too. Amen.

After praying, watch the video for Part 1.

APPLY

Discuss the following questions as a group:

1. Did the video change or inform the way you view the apostle Paul? If so, how?
2. Paul seemed to be able to fully give his heart away without losing his head. That is, he was able to balance being completely supportive of the Thessalonians while at the same time holding firm to his convictions so that he could give them clear instructions. When you're "off-balance" in one of those areas, which side do you typically feel a gravitational pull toward: giving your heart away (but not thinking straight) or holding firm to what you believe is right (but not necessarily having genuine love in your heart)?



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3. Read **1 Thessalonians 1:2–3** aloud. What can you infer regarding how Paul felt about the Thessalonians? What makes you say that?
4. Read **1 Thessalonians 2:6–12** aloud. Why do you think Paul felt the need to share with the Thessalonians what his posture was toward them?
5. Think of someone in your life you have the potential to influence. Based on how Paul approached the Thessalonians, what are some lessons you can learn from Paul on how to help that person change from the inside out?

PRAY

We suggest ending your group with prayer. Ask God to give you the wisdom to know where you can grow in terms of how you treat people and the strength to give your heart away with no strings attached.

BEFORE NEXT TIME

Read through 1 Thessalonians before your next session. In addition, try to memorize this passage:

Because we loved you so much,
we were delighted to share with you
not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.
1 Thessalonians 2:8

