



WINTER 2023 // WEEK 1

Life Group Questions

A People of Hope // January 14/15, 2023

Imitation, Influence, and Impact // 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Introduction

1 Thessalonians was one of the first letters written by Paul and he specifically mentions that he did not write it alone— Silas and Timothy were his co-authors. Because of this, a strong theme of supporting each other through community shines through in this book. This week we notice that spiritual influence begins with intentionality.

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Due to preferences over a wide range of groups, we do not expect you will cover every question each week.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

- 1) Who was a person you felt honored to meet and would enjoy having a chance to meet up with again sometime? What would you talk about at that next meeting?

- 2) If you could have any one prayer answered, what would it be?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
 - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
 - 2) Choose someone to read the passage aloud for the group.
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Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) In this week's sermon, what did you find most interesting about the background information on the people and times in which this book was written? How do you suppose knowing that will help you relate better to the message of this book?

- 2) We learned about the Thessalonian church when we studied Acts. Read Acts 17:1-9 to refresh your memory. **From this account, what do we learn about those who likely made up this young church? What kind of spiritual climate was this church planted into?**

How did Paul approach the Thessalonians with the gospel message, as recorded in Acts 17:2-3?

Put yourself in the place of young Silas alongside Paul in these first days with the Thessalonians before a church had even formed. **Are you hopeful or discouraged? What might you be thinking and feeling about what is to come?**

- 3) Now, back to Thessalonians 1:2-3. **What 3 characteristics are given about this body of believers, and what action leads to each of these characteristics?**
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Of the three things listed above how are you experiencing any of them in your life?

Which ones are a challenge to you right now? What makes them so challenging?

4) Thessalonians 1:6-7 tells us two things that these believers “became”; **write them below:**

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Who did they imitate and what pressed them to do so?

Read Hebrews 6:11-12 and discuss how this relates to what Paul says about who we imitate.

5) The Thessalonian believers “turned to God from idols” in order to fully serve the living God. **In what ways do you need to reorganize and reorient your time and priorities to fully serve Jesus?**

Who might Jesus be calling you to invest intentional influence into right now?

If this is a struggle for you, how might your Life Group support you throughout this session?

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

Prayer Focus: Soul Searching Pastor Josh reminded us that when Jesus marks our life, we exemplify Him in following His ways. Spend some time alone in a quiet spot and ask the Spirit of God to reveal the marks of Jesus on your life. How did those marks come to you? What were those experiences or insights like?

1. Pray with gratitude for the way Jesus is seen in your life.
2. Pray to have words and actions that sound forth the gospel to those who are watching you.

Scripture Focus: Begin and end each day reading or reciting Psalm 23. This Psalm is a clear reminder of the goodness of God and the way He tenderly leads and provides for us. At the end of the week, reflect on how your relationship with God was affected by making time for this simple practice.

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?