



## WINTER 2023 // WEEK 3

### Life Group Questions

A People of Hope // January 28/29, 2023

It's The People // 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13

## Introduction

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This week's passage reminds us that the church is primarily about people. We see the encouragement exchanged between Paul and the Thessalonians by way of Timothy. We also see the importance of the mission being to make disciples, not just converts. Paul wants the church in Thessalonica to keep growing towards maturity!

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)*

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- 1) What's your choice: jigsaw, crossword, or numeric puzzles, or something else?
  
- 2) What is one of your favorite stories from the life of Jesus?

## Getting Started

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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) As you think about this week's sermon, what truth leaves the strongest impression in your mind?
  
- 2) In *1 Thessalonians 2:17-20*, Paul explains his desire to see the Thessalonians because he is encouraged by their faith ("You are our glory and joy"). **Is there someone in your life that you have encouraged/influenced as a follower of Jesus, and you are encouraged by how they have continued to grow? Please share what about their discipleship to Jesus encourages you.**

What is the difference between being a convert and a disciple?

- 3) Look at *1 Thessalonians 3:1-5*. Paul reveals that he is concerned that persecution might have hindered the Thessalonians faith or caused them to have second thoughts about being disciples of Jesus. **Have you ever faced persecution for following Jesus? What was that like?**

In those times of persecution, what encouraged you to stay on course as a disciple of Jesus?

If you have not faced persecution, based on the entire passage what do you believe would encourage someone to continue following Jesus despite persecution?

- 4) In *1 Thessalonians 3:6-10* Paul describes how the report from Timothy encouraged his own discipleship. It was not only their faith, but also their love that brought him great joy that turned into giving thanks. Galatians 5:6 states, “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” **Discuss the importance of faith expressing itself through love.**

**How does this happen—how is someone changed into a more loving person? What part does God play? What part does the person play? What part do other people play?**

(Include *1 Thessalonians 3:11-13* as part of this discussion)

## Personal Spiritual Exercises

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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:** In your times of prayer this week, take a few moments for the following:

1. Thank God for the people in your life that encourage you in your discipleship to Jesus.
2. Ask God to bring one person to your mind and pray *1 Thessalonians 3:11-13* over them.

**Scripture Focus:** Each day read *Psalms 37:1-8* as a reminder of how to deal with persecutions or frustrations that other people may cause in your life. Maybe even put it on a notecard or as the wallpaper for your phone, so you can look to it more often to be reminded to trust God.

## Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

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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?