

1 Thess 1:3-8 Vital Church – a People Witnessing People

Looking back

We want to grow together, so let's just review what God has done in us from the last study:

- Do you remember the passage & what challenged you? How has God changed things in your life as a result of your response to the last study?
- What have you found difficult?
- If you haven't really thought much about it at all since last time, think of some suggestions that might help us recall and apply God's word this time around.

Getting into the passage

Read 1 Thessalonians 1v1-10 together

For each study we need to ask some basic questions. Be honest, and help one another learn:

- Was there anything in the sermon that you didn't really understand or had you confused?
- What particular things did God challenge you about to apply in your life / heart?
- Was there anything you struggled with or disagreed with?

Learning from the passage

Do you ever 'people watch'? To some extent as Christians we're supposed to watch other Christians! Not to be critical or laugh, but to be encouraged and imitate! Paul said 'Imitate me' because he was doing all he could to imitate Jesus (see also **v6-7**).

- What particularly encourages you in the lives of other believers?
- What particularly discourages you in the lives of other Christians?
- How should knowing that impact my walk with Jesus?

This letter is often called Paul's "friendly letter" because the Thessalonians are doing so well as new believers. Pick out a few things, in this passage, that clearly demonstrate Paul's enthusiasm at how they are doing.

Paul sees three areas for encouragement in **v2-3, 4-7 and 8-10**.

The first area (**v2-3**) looks at the encouragement that comes from them

becoming Christians. Divide into groups to do this part:

- There are three phrases he uses in **v3**. What are they?
- There is a distinctive effect and cause in each phrase. Identify the cause and the effect on a piece of paper.
- There are three directions of life here: Godward, Manward, Purpose ... coming to know Jesus should revolutionise every part. Discuss for each direction what the change in that direction might look like in your life as a Christian

This is what being a 'new creature' in Christ (**2 Cor 5:17**) means!

- In what areas do you struggle most?
- What can you do to tackle this struggle? How practically might this Home Group help?
- How might telling each other our testimonies be an encouragement?

The second area for encouragement is the transforming work of Jesus in them

- There are three "withs" in **v5**. What are they? How might each be a part of the work of transformation within us?
 - Can we hinder this transforming work? For each 'with', what do we do that might hinder God's work?
 - For each 'with', how might we respond to in our lives to not hinder God's work?
 - How does seeing this transforming work encourage us?
 - It can be useful to testify to God's work in you. Give time to share what God has been challenging you about recently and how He has been at work in you.
- Others *should* be able to imitate you (**v6-7**)! What a challenge!!

The third area for encouragement is in **v8-10**, the encouragement that comes from the clear message that rang out from their lives!

- In your situation, who is it you interact with regularly who should be able to hear the message of Jesus from your life?
- What can others pray about to help your life resound for Jesus?

Regular Questions to End

Each time you meet we'd love you to end by asking some searching questions around the group. Be honest, so you can support one another as you learn and apply these things together in the days ahead!

- If there was one thing you could highlight that God is challenging you about to pray over / change / seek His help in, what is it?
- Is there one thing you are going to take away with you as an encouragement?
- What can others pray for you to help you respond to His challenge?