

1 THESSALONIANS

DISCUSSION GUIDE 3

ABOUT THIS SERIES

What do you do when you're persecuted for being a Christian?

Seventeen years after the resurrection of Jesus, the persecution of Christians became hostile in a city called Thessalonica. As they lost their livelihood and lost their lives, the followers of Jesus naturally started to question if the faith was worth the cost.

To encourage them, the Apostle Paul wrote them a letter to give them hope and perspective to their persecution. Today, this letter is known in your Bible as "1 Thessalonians". More than a historical document, 1 Thessalonians gives perspective to all Christians as they endure any hardships or persecution.

Join St. Mark for the next five weeks and explore 1 Thessalonians, one verse at a time, and discover timeless truths to give you hope today.

ITEMS NEEDED

☐ Bibles

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray for your group | <input type="checkbox"/> Read through the Discussion Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean meeting area | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean bathroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Crack front door |

OPENING (10 MIN)

After a general welcome, say: For today's icebreaker, let's go around —

DOES ANYONE HAVE A STORY OF GETTING IN TROUBLE BECAUSE YOU HAD A PROGRESS REPORT OR A REPORT CARD THAT YOUR PARENTS DIDN'T APPROVE OF?

After a brief discussion, say: During today's discussion, among other topics, we're going to discuss the Thessalonians progress report in the faith and consider what it means for us.

But before we get into all of that, let's pray.

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Host, lead the group in prayer, asking God to bless your time together.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-19 (10 MIN)

Before we get to chapter 3, we'll pick up at the end of chapter 2.

CAN SOMEONE READ 1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-19 ALOUD FOR US?

After the reading, say: Paul talks about how, at the coming of the Lord Jesus, he will rejoice that the Thessalonians are there. Why? Because Paul is a big reason they'll be in heaven. Because he dared to witness to them, they are his hope, joy, crown, and glory in the presence of God.

WHY ARE SO MANY CHRISTIANS NOT CONSUMED BY THE THOUGHT OF SAVING THE LOST LIKE IT CONSUMED PAUL?

WHO IS SOMEONE APART FROM GOD YOU ARE WORKING TO SEE IN HEAVEN?

1 THESSALONIANS 3:1-6 (10 MIN)

After a discussion, say: Let's keep reading.

CAN SOMEONE READ VERSES 1-10 ALOUD FOR THE GROUP?

After the reading, say: Paul talks about the good progress report he received about the faith and love of Thessalonians. This might not be a fun thought, but it can be a productive and formative one. Don't worry, we won't share our grade.

THINK TO YOURSELF—ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, WITH 1 BEING NEARLY DEAD AND 10 BEING ON FIRE—HOW ACTIVE AND ALIVE IS YOUR CURRENT FAITH LIFE?

NOW LET'S SHARE—HOW MIGHT ASSIGNING A NUMBER CHANGE THE WAY YOU LIVE OUT YOUR FAITH TOMORROW?

1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-13 (10 MIN)

After a discussion, say: Verses 11 through 13 marks the middle of the letter with a prayer. It's a prayer I'll change some of the wording to make it our prayer together.

Let's pray—

O God, our Father, I ask that you yourself and our Lord Jesus would clear the way for us to continue in fellowship as a Small Group. And Lord, make our love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as you love us. Strengthen our hearts so that we will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father through our Lord Jesus when comes with all of your holy people.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

ANY REACTIONS TO PRAYING THROUGH SCRIPTURE LIKE THAT?

CLOSING PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)

After a discussion, say: Speaking of prayer—

ARE THERE ANY OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS?

Host, after taking prayer requests, close the group in prayer.