

COVENANT^{EFC}

FEBRUARY
2022
DEVOTIONAL
JOURNAL

*For this is the will of God, your
sanctification: that you abstain
from sexual immorality;*

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3



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MEMORY VERSES

2022

From 1 & 2 Thessalonians

◆ January

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit

– 1 Thessalonians 1:6 (ESV)

◆ February

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality

– 1 Thessalonians 4:3 (ESV)

◆ March

that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honour – 1 Thessalonians 4:4 (ESV)

◆ April

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep.

– 1 Thessalonians 4:14 (ESV)

◆ May

For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. – 1 Thessalonians 5:2 (ESV)

◆ June

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:14 (ESV)

◆ July

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:15 (ESV)

◆ August

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)

◆ September

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power. – 2 Thessalonians 1:11 (ESV)

◆ October

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

– 2 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV)

◆ November

But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. – 2 Thessalonians 3:3 (ESV)

◆ December

As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

– 2 Thessalonians 3:13 (ESV)

FOREWORD

BY SENIOR PASTORS

PREPARING TO MEET KING JESUS

What do times of crisis and uncertainty compel us towards? They compel us to confront our own mortality, scrutinise our foundations and evaluate our purpose. Most of all, they compel us to seek the face of God.

As we sought the Lord, He assured us through these verses:

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

– Matthew 16:18-19 (ESV)

In these uncertain times, we can be rested in Jesus because He has promised that He Himself will build His Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail. The keys of the Kingdom of God

are the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ – His incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension and second coming. And we are to proclaim it! As the Church, it is our responsibility and privilege to do so. When people believe the Good News, they are able to enter God’s Kingdom.

We are reminded of the charge that the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy as the spiritual leader of the church at Ephesus:

“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in

season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”
– 2 Timothy 4:1-4 (ESV)

Hence, this year’s spiritual burden is “Preparing to Meet King Jesus” — make ready God’s Kingdom people to prepare the world to meet King Jesus in eternity. The world is in darkness and pain. The task is urgent. We believe that we are now in the final hour. We have to prepare ourselves and others to meet King Jesus. This is really what the Church is all about.

How can we prepare ourselves to meet King Jesus?

A People Prepared for His Coming: Be Watchful!

In Luke 1:17, John the Baptist’s calling was to prepare the people for the first coming of our Lord. Like him, we are called to prepare the people for Christ’s second coming. We are to be watchful and persevere in prayer, so as to be ready for the coming of the Lord.

A People Prepared to Stand Firm and Take Action: Be Fruitful!

In times of great distress, those who know their God will stand firm and take action (Dan 11:32). This pandemic is a time of harvest. Many people everywhere are looking for hope. So let us stand firm in our calling as a church

We have to prepare ourselves and others to meet King Jesus. This is really what the Church is all about.

(to be disciples of *A Certain Kind* and return the Church to its disciplemaking roots through Authentic Discipleship and Intentional Disciplemaking) and take action to multiply leaders and disciplemakers for great fruitfulness.

A People Prepared in Personal Holiness: Be Faithful!

1 Thessalonians 4:1-3 remind us to guard our hearts and be faithful, for our own personal sanctification and holiness. Let’s be faithful in our personal integrity and walk with God, aligning our lives back to God in holiness and faithfulness.

This Devotional Journal is designed to help you walk daily with God and experience the transforming power of His Word and Spirit as you reflect, pray and obey the Lord in everything. May you be greatly blessed as you prepare yourselves and many others to meet King Jesus!

In Christ,
Rev Tan Kay Kiong and
Rev Tony Yeo

GUIDE TO USING THIS DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

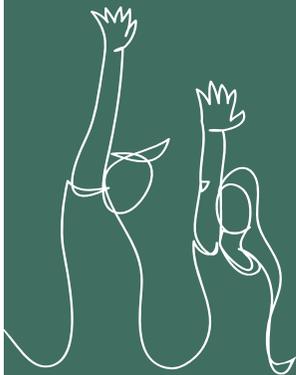
Step 1

PREPARE YOUR HEART IN GOD'S PRESENCE

- ◆ Select a fixed time (preferably in the morning before you begin your day) and a quiet place where you can be alone and undisturbed.
- ◆ Observe a moment of silence as you acknowledge God's presence. Centre down.
- ◆ Begin with a song of worship. Meditate on the lyrics even if you are unfamiliar with the tune. (Refer to the list of worship songs provided.)
- ◆ Ask God to open your heart to hear Him.

NEW IN 2022

You can now type in the PDF copy of the Devotional Journal using your digital device as we have allotted fillable boxes for you to journal your thoughts and prayers without space constraints.



SOMETHING TO PONDER

Examining your life is essential in your faith journey. Your redeemed life as a disciple of Christ deserves careful examining. May you take root and bear fruit in Him!

*The English Standard Version (ESV)
is the default Bible version translation
unless otherwise specified.*

Step 2

ALLOW GOD TO S.O.A.P. YOU WITH HIS WORD AND SPIRIT

- ◆ Scripture – Take your time to meditate on the Scripture passage for the day. Pause and mull over words and phrases that stand out to you.
- ◆ Observation – Jot down significant insights and reflections from the passage you have read. You may use the guiding questions provided. The “Deeper Reflection” section is to aid your contemplation of the Scripture. It is not to replace your own observation, for the Holy Spirit illuminates the Scripture to you as you seek Him earnestly.
- ◆ Application – Note down a specific and practical commitment to God's Word for you. Is there a command to obey, a sin to avoid, an example to follow, or a principle to live out? Where appropriate, share your devotional entry with someone.
- ◆ Prayer – Bring your heartfelt response to God in prayer.



PRAYER POINTERS FOR 2022

We have provided prayer pointers for Pastors and Staff every Tuesday and for one of the 3 Faith Exploits (Disciple the Generations, Singapore and the Nations) every Wednesday. Every Thursday, a prayer pointer is included for Outreach/Missions/New Life Leaders. On each Friday, there is a prayer pointer for SGI Leaders (e.g. Zone Mentors, CG Leaders and Assistant CG Leaders). A prayer pointer for Church Board Members is included every Saturday. Please pray for each group as well as any specific individuals whom God may bring to your mind.

PRAY FOR EAST ASIA

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour”

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-3 (ESV)

FIRST, WE NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ALL authorities, including governing authorities, have been established by God (Rom 13:1), whether or not we like them or their political ideologies match ours. Therefore, let us pray in these ways:

- Give thanks for the governing authorities that God has placed over the countries of East Asia.
- For government leaders and those in authority to have godly character, such as wisdom, justice, righteousness, integrity, compassion and above all be God-fearing.
- For the salvation of unbelievers who are in authority. For the veils to be removed from their minds (2 Cor 4:4) and for their hearts to change (Eze 36:26).

Pray for PRC:

- For God’s protection over the people from COVID-19 when they travel during the Chinese New Year period.
- That God will give opportunities for Christians to live out the Gospel during the Chinese New Year season when many return home.
- That Christians will stand firm in their faith and grow in the true knowledge of God’s Word, notwithstanding increasing restrictions on the access to Christian content.
- That the unbelievers’ hearts will be increasingly open to the Gospel, despite strong cultural and social barriers.
- For God’s shepherds to have good spiritual health, physical and emotional well-being; clear vision and anointing from God to diligently engage in discipling work; strength to persevere in ministry when they face difficult challenges; and wisdom in time management to balance their family life and ministry work.

Pray for Japan:

- Give thanks to God for outreach opportunities in Japan through sports. Ask God for open doors for the Gospel to enter schools, universities and the community.
- For the Japanese to find meaning in life and hope in Jesus.
- For church revival in Japan and that Japanese Christians, especially the young people, will be on fire for God and passionate to make Christ known in their respective generations.
- For the next generation of Japanese Christians to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus and have the desire to serve the Lord with their abilities, time and energy.
- For the believers in Japan to study God’s Word and grow in their knowledge of God and His mission in the world.
- For proper follow-up and discipling of new converts from the Christmas outreaches and other evangelistic efforts, so that they will develop into spiritually healthy and fruitful discipling makers who in turn make disciples.

WORSHIP SONGS

JANUARY – FEBRUARY

NEW DOXOLOGY

Verse 1

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow
Praise Him, all creatures here below
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost

Verse 2

Let earth and heavenly saints proclaim
The power and might of His great Name
Let us exalt on bended knee
Praise God, the Holy Trinity

Chorus

Praise God, praise God
Praise God, Who saved my soul
Praise God, praise God
Praise God from Whom all blessings flow

Verse 3

Praise to the King, His throne transcends
His crown and Kingdom never end
Now and throughout eternity
I'll praise the One Who died for me
(Repeat Chorus)

Verse 4

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow
Praise Him, all creatures here below
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost

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10,000 REASONS (BLESS THE LORD)

Chorus

Bless the Lord O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name

Verse 1

The sun comes up it's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening comes

Verse 2

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger
Your name is great and Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

Verse 3

And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore

Ending

I'll worship Your holy name
Worship Your holy name
Worship Your holy name

Jonas Myrin | Matt Redman
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BE THOU MY VISION

Verse 1

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light

Verse 2

Be Thou my wisdom and Thou my true Word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one

Verse 3

High King of heaven, my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all

Ending

Be Thou my vision

Eleanor Henrietta Hull | Mary Elizabeth Byrne | Russell Mauldin
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GOODNESS OF GOD

Verse 1

I love You Lord
Oh Your mercy never fails me
All my days
I've been held in Your hands
From the moment that I wake up
Until I lay my head
I will sing of the goodness of God

Chorus

All my life You have been faithful
All my life You have been so, so good
With every breath that I am able
I will sing of the goodness of God

Verse 2

I love Your voice
You have led me through the fire
In darkest nights
You are close like no other
I've known You as a father
I've known You as a friend
I have lived in the goodness of God

Bridge

Your goodness is running after
It's running after me
Your goodness is running after
It's running after me
With my life laid down
I'm surrendered now
I give You everything
Your goodness is running after
It's running after me

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HOSANNA (PRAISE IS RISING)

Verse 1

Praise is rising
Eyes are turning to You
We turn to You
Hope is stirring
Hearts are yearning for You
We long for You
'Cause when we see You
We find strength to face the day
In Your presence
All our fears are washed away
(Washed away)

Chorus

Hosanna, hosanna
You are the God who saves us
Worthy of all our praises
Hosanna, hosanna
Come have Your way among us
We welcome You here, Lord Jesus

Verse 2

Hear the sound of
Hearts returning to You
We turn to You
In Your Kingdom
Broken lives are made new
You make us new
'Cause when we see You
We find strength to face the day
In Your presence
All our fears are washed away
(Washed away)

Ending

Hosanna, hosanna

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WONDERFUL GOD

Verse 1

There is no other God like You
Who made the heavens and the earth
And fills my heart with joy unending
All I can do is give my life
Offer to You a sacrifice
Here is my heart for You unending

Bridge

All of my life belongs to You alone
With every breath my song will rise to You

Chorus

You are the joy of every nation
The giver of salvation
Wonderful God
You are God throughout the ages
Enthroned upon our praises
Wonderful God

Verse 2

Every morning when I rise
It is Your presence I desire
To see Your faithfulness unending
Mercy and goodness follow me
For in Your presence I am free
I put my trust in You unending

Denis Campos
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WE PRAISE YOU

Verse 1

Let praise be a weapon that silences the enemy
 Let praise be a weapon that conquers all anxiety
 Let it rise, let praise arise

Verse 2

We sing Your name in the dark
 And it changes everything
 We sing with all we are and we claim Your victory
 Let it rise, let praise arise

Chorus

We'll see you break down every wall
 We'll watch the giants fall
 For fear cannot survive when we praise You
 The God of breakthrough's on our side
 Forever lift Him high
 With all creation cry, God we praise You

Interlude 1

Oh, we praise You, oh

Verse 3

Let faith be the song
 That overcomes the raging sea
 Let faith be the song
 That calms the storm inside of me
 Let it rise, let faith arise

Interlude 2

Oh we praise You, oh we praise You
 Oh we praise You, oh we praise You

Bridge

This is what living looks like
 This is what freedom feels like
 This is what Heaven sounds like
 We praise You
 We praise You
 (Repeat)

Ending

Oh, we praise You
 Oh, we praise You
 Oh, we praise You
 Oh yes, with all Your praise

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GLORIFY YOU ALONE

Verse 1

Who is this King of glory
Beautiful and matchless one
Who is this King so holy
Every knee will bow at His throne

Pre-Chorus

Jesus, the Lamb of God
Saviour and King

Chorus

You alone are worthy of our praise forever
You alone are seated on the throne of Heaven
Glorify, glorify, You alone

Verse 2

Who is this King of mercy
Wonderful and full of grace
Who is this King so worthy
Nations fear and kingdoms praise

Verse 3

You are the King that saves us
Powerful and full of love
You are the King that gave us
Life with every drop of Your blood

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ALABASTER JAR

Verse 1

This alabaster jar is all I have of worth
I break it at Your feet, Lord
It's less than You deserve
You're far more beautiful
More precious than the oil
The sum of my desires
And the fullness of my joy
Like You spilled Your blood, I spill my heart
As an offering to my King

Chorus

Here I am take me as an offering
Here I am giving every heartbeat for Your glory
Take me

Verse 2

This time that I have left is all I have of worth
I lay it at Your feet, Lord
It's less than You deserve
And though I've little strength
And though my days are few
You gave Your life for me
So I will live my life for You
Like You spilled Your blood, I spill my heart
As an offering to my King

Bridge

(You are)
Worthy, worthy
You are worthy
Worthy is the Lord
(Repeat 8x)

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ANTHEM

Verse 1

So many reasons
Too many to count
To say that I love You
To worship You now
Your love is perfect
Your heart is kind
I'm Yours forever
Forever You're mine

Chorus

Jesus, the anthem of my heart
Jesus, the anchor of my soul
I'm overwhelmed by all You are
Oh how I love You

Verse 2

You call me beloved
You call me friend
Your grace says I'm worthy
You welcome me in
Now all that I long for
All that I need
Is to be in Your presence
Forever I fall at Your feet

Bridge

Faithful to the end
God, You are always good
Where do I begin
There's so many reasons to love You
Your promise never breaks
Your beauty never fades
What else can I say
There's so many reasons to love You

Interlude

Oh, there's so many reasons to love You
Oh

Ending

I'm overwhelmed by all You are
Oh how I love You
I'm overwhelmed by all You are
Oh how I love You

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TUE
01

Faithful Suffering Church

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 2:14; Acts 17:5-9

OBSERVATION

Why was Paul forced to leave Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9)?

APPLICATION

What will it mean for me to suffer affliction in receiving the Word of God?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for pastors and staff: To stand fast in the Lord in suffering
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

WHEN PAUL PREACHED THE GOSPEL IN THE SYNAGOGUE

in Thessalonica, some Jews, and many Greek God-fearers and leading women became believers (Acts 17:1-4). But when Paul addresses “the church of the Thessalonians” as a whole (1 Thess 1:1), he states that they had “turned from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thess 1:9). These Thessalonians were “converted from full paganism with no stopover in the synagogue system”¹. And by the time Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, “the church in the majority was already Gentile Christian”². The Thessalonians “received the word” through Paul’s ministry “in much affliction” (v.6) – which they “suffered...from your own countrymen” (1 Thess 2:14). Thessalonica, the provincial capital of Macedonia, was a “free city”³ that had the autonomy to “govern themselves according to their ancestral custom and were exempt from tribute to Rome”⁴ and “had aligned herself with the interests of Rome and had reaped their benefits”⁵. And in this context, Thessalonica became “a prominent centre for the worship of the Roman emperors”⁶. Thus, when “the people and the city authorities” heard about Paul’s preaching of Jesus replacing Caesar as king, they viewed it as seditious, and were “disturbed” (Acts 17:7-9), for fear of losing their favoured position from Rome.⁷ And thus the Thessalonian believers were “accused of being part of a seditious movement”⁸ and were persecuted “by your own countrymen” (1 Thess 2:14). But they were “standing fast in the Lord” (1 Thess 3:8).

¹ Gary S. Shogren, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Zondervan, 2012), 23

² Gary S. Shogren, 23

³ Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Apollos, 2002), 21

⁴ Gene L. Green, 21

⁵ Gene L. Green, 21

⁶ Gary S. Shogren, 18

⁷ Gene L. Green, 28

⁸ Gene L. Green, 28

WED
02

Glowing, Growing Church

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about the spiritual growth of the church of the Thessalonians?

APPLICATION

How will I want to grow in my spiritual life in terms of being inwardly intensive and outwardly extensive?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for Singapore: To have impactful, growing and glowing churches
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

HAVING BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE THESSALONICA ABRUPTLY, Paul went south to Berea, then to Athens and to Corinth (Acts 17:10-16; 18:1). And it was at Corinth that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians. Paul spent 18 months in Corinth “teaching the word of God among them” (Acts 18:11). However, in spite of such long-time good feeding on the Word of God, the Corinthians were still “infants in Christ”, such that Paul could not address them as “spiritual people, but as people of the flesh” (1 Cor 3:1). But in stark contrast, the new and young Thessalonian church – with which Paul spent only a short time, and was “left without leadership and without having received all the instruction they needed (cf. 1 Thess 4:13)”⁹ – was a glowing, growing church. The church was not flourishing in peaceful and pleasant circumstances, but rather, in the crucible of persecution (1 Thess 2:14). The church’s growth was **inwardly intensive**: “your **work** of faith and **labour** of love and **steadfastness** of hope” (v.3). The church’s growth was also **outwardly extensive**: they greatly impacted both believers and unbelievers “in Macedonia and in Achaia”, by their exemplary “faith in the Lord” and their proclamation of “the word of the Lord” (vv.6-8). The power of the Holy Spirit in which the Thessalonians received the Word of God (vv.5-6) continued to be actively present in this new and young church, even when apostolic instruction was abruptly discontinued. The work of God is the work of God.

⁹ Gene L. Green, 51

THU
03

Committed Exemplary Shepherds

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2:7, 10-12, 17-18; 3:1-2

OBSERVATION

What was Paul's ministry to the Thessalonians like?

APPLICATION

What changes do I need to make in making disciples (in any setting)?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Outreach/Missions/New Life leaders: To be exemplary godly leaders at home and in the community
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

PAUL WAS ABLE TO SAY WITH HUMBLE CONFIDENCE TO

the Thessalonians: “You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake” (v.5). This statement, along with other variant “You know” refrains in the letter (1 Thess 2:1, 5, 11), reflects the kind of relationship and ministry that Paul had with the Thessalonians. It was a relationship and ministry marked by **depth**. Paul shepherded them “like a nursing mother taking care of her own children” (1 Thess 2:7) and “like a father with his children” (1 Thess 2:11-12); and these new converts were “witnesses” – even as God was – to how Paul lived a “holy and righteous and blameless” life before them (1 Thess 2:10). Significantly, such depth of relationship and ministry was built in only a short time, and yet it made a vital contribution to the Thessalonians’ “standing fast in the Lord” amidst suffering “much affliction” (1 Thess 1:6; 3:8), and making a great impact on both believers and unbelievers “in Macedonia and in Achaia” (1 Thess 1:7-8). During his separation from the Thessalonians, Paul made attempts – “again and again” – to return to Thessalonica to continue building up the faith of his spiritual children (1 Thess 2:18). When he could not do so and “could bear it no longer”, he sent Timothy to go on his behalf (1 Thess 3:1-2). Behind Paul’s relentless attempts was the “great **desire** to see you face to face” (1 Thess 2:17). Such is a biblical model for disciplinemaking and pastoral work.

FRI
04

A God-Pleasing People

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

OBSERVATION

What does it mean for the Thessalonian believers to live a God-pleasing life?

APPLICATION

What changes do I need to make in my life with regards to holiness before God and love towards God's people?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for SGI leaders: To pursue a God-pleasing and God-honouring life
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

PAUL EXHORTED THE THESSALONIANS REGARDING “HOW

you ought to walk and to please God” (v.1) in two “critical ways”¹⁰: holiness (vv.1-8) and love (vv.9-12). He addresses at length specifically about abstaining from sexual immorality in holy living (v.3). He had “solemnly warned” them about this when he was with them (v.6) and was now giving a strong reminder. We will appreciate this against the background that Thessalonians “had depraved sex lives”¹¹. “Thessalonica had all the vices of any bustling trade city. Theatrical works slid more and more towards the violent and sexually crude. Arrival by sea and land would demand drinking, gambling and sex, and part of the economy of the city was keeping visitors satisfied. Young men in particular were expected to have an active sex life, with slaves, prostitutes or lovers. Engaging in too much sex was thought to be a sign of self-indulgence and economic wantonness, but not an offense against God or the gods. Bisexuality was more common in Macedonia and Achaia than in other parts of the [Roman] empire, especially because of the shortage of marriageable women.”¹² Thessalonica was “the home of many people of the working and artisan class”¹³ and “a large, if not most” of these people made up the church.¹⁴ In the church were also people from “the higher social class”, like Jason (Acts 17:6, 9) and Aristarchus (Acts 20:4).¹⁵ But these social and economic differences did not keep the church from being strong in “brotherly love” (vv.9-10).

¹⁰ D. A. Carson & Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament, Second Edition* (Zondervan, 1992, 2005), 534

¹¹ Gary S. Shogren, 20

¹² Gary S. Shogren, 20

¹³ Gene L. Green, 29

¹⁴ Gene L. Green, 30

¹⁵ Gene L. Green, 29

SAT
05

An Eschatological People

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:11-13; 4:13-18; 5:23-24

OBSERVATION

How do all the five chapters of 1 Thessalonians end?

APPLICATION

What does it mean for me to live as an eschatological people?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Church Board: To live life in view of Christ's Second Coming
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

FIRST THESSALONIANS HAS A DISTINCT ESCHATOLOGICAL

emphasis. Every of the letter's five chapters ends with the motif of the Second Coming of Christ: "to wait for His Son from heaven" (v.10); the Thessalonians were Paul's hope, joy and crown of boasting "before the Lord at His coming" (1 Thess 2:19); God will establish the hearts of His people to be blameless in holiness before Him "at the coming of our Lord Jesus" (1 Thess 3:13); and God will sanctify completely the whole being of His people "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 5:23). The theme of "the coming of the Lord" (1 Thess 4:15) and "the day of the Lord" (1 Thess 5:2) is dominant in chapters 4 and 5 of the letter (1 Thess 4:13-18; 5:1-11). Paul's emphasis on eschatology in 1 Thessalonians is **occasional** in nature – in that, he was addressing certain pastoral needs of the new converts: confusion over the relationship of deceased Christians to Christ's Second Coming (1 Thess 4:13) and an over-emphasis on the near coming of Christ (1 Thess 5:1-2).¹⁶ Eschatology ought to be **normal** in our daily life and not occasional. If we were to take all the five chapters of 1 Thessalonians as a paradigm for every day of our lives, it would mean that for us, each day ends with the thought of the Lord's Second Coming: "The Lord has not come today. Perhaps, tomorrow. Come, Lord Jesus (Rev 22:20)." And we, living as an eschatological people, start each new day with "The Lord may come today".

¹⁶ G. K. Beale, 1-2 Thessalonians, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series* (IVP Academic, 2003), 16

SUN
06

SUNDAY JOURNAL

SCRIPTURE

OBSERVATION

APPLICATION

PRAYER

THE PAST WEEK

Review

◆ What was my high point and my low point for the week?

◆ What gave me life and what drained me?

◆ How was the Spirit of God at work?

THE PAST WEEK

Reflect

- ◆ What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

Respond

- ◆ What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying? Commit in prayer.

Family Devotional

Week 1

Compassion:
Caring enough to do something about someone else's need.

Memory Verse

"The Lord has shown you what is good. He has told you what he requires of you. You must act with justice. You must love to show mercy. And you must be humble as you live in the sight of your God." - Micah 6:8 (NIRV)

* Bottom Line

Following Jesus means caring about others.*

* Bible Story

Luke 4:14-24, 28-30 - Jesus' Mission Statement

* Activity

Caring-In-Action

Props: Strips of paper

Get each of your family members to write an action verb on a strip of paper, for example, "give", "teach", "visit", "run", "share" and "listen". The words used can be repeated if necessary. Then ask everyone to pick one randomly, read what is written on it and think of a way that he or she will show care for others using the action verb. Get your family to share their thoughts after the game and commit everyone's "action plan" in prayer.

Say, "How do we show care for others? It is not enough just to talk about it, we have to do it. Jesus shows this so that His followers will do the same for others. We do it because he first loved us (1 Jn 4:19)."

* Talk About It

- Read Isaiah 61:1-2, what did Isaiah say would be Jesus' purpose?
- Think of the stories you have read in the Bible about Jesus. What are some examples of how Jesus cared for someone else's needs?
- What does compassion look like for us?
- What are the ways that we can care for the needs of others?

Parents: Share with your family members about an experience in which you made personal sacrifices to help others. What happened? How did you feel? How did God help you? How did the incident change the way you think or behave?

* Prayer

Thank Jesus for His love for us. Ask for His guidance to show us ways to care for others.

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Adapted by JoshuaWong/CEFC/February2022

BIBLE STORY VIDEO
<https://cefc.ch/22FD02W1>



MON
07

The Church's Fundamental Twofold Nature

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:1

OBSERVATION

What is the significance of the Thessalonians being described by Paul as "the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"?

APPLICATION

What does it mean for me to live in God and Christ, and in the world?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You have placed Your Church in the world. Keep Your Church from loving and conforming to the world. Sanctify Your Church by Your Word and the Spirit, that You may present her to Yourself in splendour, and as holy and without blemish.¹⁷ This is Your commitment of love to Your Church. Let Your life flow to the world through Your Church.



DEEPER REFLECTION

PAUL INCLUDED SILVANUS (SILAS) AND TIMOTHY IN HIS epistolary greeting (v.1), because they were his fellow-workers in his ministry, who accompanied him in his travels (Acts 15:40-20:2; note 15:40 and 16:1-3), preached the Word of God alongside him (2 Cor 1:19) and "may have had some part in writing this letter"¹⁸. The theological expression, "the church **of** the Thessalonians **in** God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (v.1), points to the **fundamental twofold nature** of the church, which is reflected in another similar way: "the church **of** God that is **at** Corinth" (1 Cor 1:2). This means the church of God was living in Thessalonica/Corinth and the Thessalonian/ Corinthian church was living in God. "Every church has two homes, two environments and two habitats": It lives in God and it lives in the world.¹⁹ The church "**in**" God and Christ points to the "vital, organic union" the church has with God and Christ "which makes possible the sharing of a common life"²⁰ between the two. It means the church is "rooted in" and "living in" God and Christ, and "drawing its life from" Them.²¹ Paul was keenly aware of the insecurity felt by this young church suffering "much affliction" in being persecuted by their own countrymen (1 Thess 1:6; 2:14). He wanted to remind them that in the midst of their fiery trials, their security, strength and stability were "**in** God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ", that they were "now standing in the realm where God and Christ dominate"²².

¹⁷ Ephesians 5:26-27

¹⁸ G. K. Beale, 41

¹⁹ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Thessalonians, The Bible Speaks Today* (IVP, 1991), 28

²⁰ John R. W. Stott, 28

²¹ John R. W. Stott, 28

²² G. K. Beale, 43

TUE
08

Grace, Peace and Abundant Thanksgiving

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3a

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about Paul's thanksgiving to God (vv.2-3a)?

APPLICATION

What changes do I need to make in the area of thanksgiving to God?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for pastors and staff: To be filled with thankfulness to God in all things
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

THE “RESULTING BENEFIT”²³ OF THE THESSALONIANS’

secure standing in the realm where God and Christ dominate is: “Grace to you and peace” (v.1). This is no casual social greeting, but an expression of a theological reality. It is a statement of fact of our present blessed condition “in” God and Christ, as well as a prayer for a hoped for future state.²⁴ We can make this our daily prayer with thanksgiving: “God, may Your grace, mercy and peace be multiplied to me and my family this day” (1 Tim 1:2; 1 Pet 1:2). God’s “peace” is “not just the absence of conflict, but the fullness of health and harmony through reconciliation with Him and with each other”²⁵ at home and in the church. God’s “grace” is His free, undeserved favour through Christ “which confers this peace and sustains it”²⁶. 1 Thessalonians is “at heart a record of”²⁷ Paul’s thanksgiving to God, which extends from 1:2-2:12, and formally picked up again in 2:13 and 3:9.²⁸ Note the depth and intensity of Paul’s thanksgiving to God for the Thessalonians: “always...constantly mentioning...remembering in the presence of our God and Father...” (vv.2-3) – which reflects Paul’s prayerful meditation on the experience of divine grace.²⁹ “Without a prayerful contemplation of divine blessings, there can be no attitude of thanksgiving. If reflection on these things does not occur continually or unceasingly, our thankful perspective will be inconsistent and intermittent.”³⁰

²³ G. K. Beale, 43

²⁴ G. K. Beale, 43

²⁵ John R. W. Stott, 29

²⁶ John R. W. Stott, 29

²⁷ Gary S. Shogren, 22

²⁸ G. K. Beale, 44

²⁹ G. K. Beale, 45

³⁰ G. K. Beale, 45

WED
09

Eminent Characteristics of God's People (1)

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; Romans 4:18-21

OBSERVATION

What is "work of faith" in Paul's thanksgiving to God for the Thessalonians?

APPLICATION

How am I growing in "work of faith"?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for Singapore: To turn to Christ for hope amidst the COVID-19 pandemic
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

PAUL GAVE THANKS TO GOD IN "CONSTANTLY MENTIONING" and "remembering" the Thessalonians in His presence (vv.2-3a). It is when we think of people and remember them – their names, faces, life situations and needs – that we are prompted to thank God and to pray for them.³¹ What particularly stirred up Paul's thanksgiving to God were "the three most eminent Christian graces"³² his new converts possessed: faith, love and hope. These are "not some invisible qualities that bear no relationship to the real world", but are "vibrant realities that express themselves visibly"³³, as Paul describes them in intensive concrete terms: "**work** of faith, **labour** of love and **steadfastness** of hope" (v.3). It is noteworthy that "too often churches today" – and individual believers, too – "tend to give thanks only for visible and quantifiable realities"³⁴, rather than like Paul who gave thanks for "more unquantifiable realities"³⁵ such as faith, love and hope, which are needed to inspire visible actions and attitudes. The faith is "work of faith" – "work produced by faith" (NIV) – that is, faith in action. Faith in action is **Godward** – like still trusting in the Word of God in hope against hope situations, believing that the faithful God can and does act beyond the proper time of life (Rom 4:18-21; Heb 11:11). Faith in action is also **manward** – like meeting the practical needs of people (Jas 2:14-17). Authentic faith is action faith.

³¹ John R. W. Stott, 29

³² John R. W. Stott, 29

³³ Gary S Shogren, 59

³⁴ G. K. Beale, 49

³⁵ G. K. Beale, 49

THU
10

Eminent Characteristics of God's People (2)

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; Romans 5:1-5

OBSERVATION

What is "labour of love" and "steadfastness of hope" in Paul's thanksgiving to God for the Thessalonians?

APPLICATION

How am I growing in "labour of love" and "steadfastness of hope"?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Outreach/Missions/New Life leaders: To grow deep in love and steadfast in hope
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

PAUL THANKED GOD FOR THE THESSALONIANS' "LABOUR of love" after their "work of faith" (v.3). Elsewhere, Paul talks about "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6), thus linking faith and love. The Thessalonians expressed their love in "hard, strenuous and exhausting labour"³⁶. True love is far from being simply an emotion, it seeks the best for the other and labours for the other's benefit.³⁷ The Thessalonians' "labour of love" "refers to any kind of self-sacrificing labour the believers engaged in as they served those both inside and outside the community"³⁸. Let this "labour of love" be found first in our marriage and family, and then flow out into the church and the world. The Thessalonians lived as a people of hope in the God of hope (cf. Rom 15:13). Their hope was marked by perseverance, endurance and steadfastness (v.3). Perseverance, endurance and steadfastness is possible when our hope is in a person – "in our Lord Jesus Christ" (v.3). And this presupposes a growing relationship with Christ as "Lord" in our lives and seeing Him as "Lord" sitting on the throne, ruling supremely over all things. And this hope is solid confidence rooted in the expectation of Christ's coming, the goal and end of history. For Paul, perseverance is produced through suffering, and perseverance produces character, and character produces hope (Rom 5:3-4). "Character produces hope" means that hope is character.

³⁶ Gene L. Green, 90

³⁷ Gene L. Green, 90

³⁸ Gene L. Green, 90

FRI
11

Chosen by God in Love

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:3-4; Deuteronomy 7:6-8

OBSERVATION

What do Paul and Moses say about God's election of a people for Himself?

APPLICATION

What does it mean for me that God has chosen me in His love for me?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for SGI leaders: To find security in being chosen by God in love
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

GOD'S ELECTION OF A PEOPLE FOR HIMSELF IS A MYSTERY:

“Scripture nowhere dispels the mystery of election, and we should beware of any who try to systematise it too precisely or rigidly. It is not likely that we shall discover a simple solution to a problem which has baffled the best of brains of Christendom for centuries.”³⁹ Amidst the difficulties and questions over the doctrine of election, one thing is clear: God chose us in love. Paul unites the love of God and the election of God: “**loved** by God, that He has **chosen** you” (v.4). God “has **chosen**” Israel, and us in Christ, “to be a people for His treasured possession...He set His **love** on you and **chose** you...because the LORD **loves** you” (Deut 7:6-8). Why did God choose us? Because He loves us. Why does God love us? Because He loves us. And God loves us not because we are loveable, but only because “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8, 16). And God’s love was most supremely demonstrated on the cross. So, “with this mystery we must rest content”⁴⁰ with constant deep gratitude to God, while humbly asking, “God, why **me?**” And “we know” that God has chosen us because we are growing in active and productive faith, love and hope (vv.3-4). The church is “a community beloved and chosen **by God** in a past eternity, rooted **in God** and drawing its life **from Him**, and exhibiting this **life of God** in a faith that works, a love which labours and a hope which endures”⁴¹.

³⁹ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians, The Bible Speaks Today* (IVP, 1979), 37

⁴⁰ John R. W. Stott, *Thessalonians*, 31

⁴¹ John R. W. Stott, *Thessalonians*, 31; **emphasis mine**

SAT
12

Active Living Word of God

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5a

OBSERVATION

What characterises the Word of God?

APPLICATION

How do I know that when I read, hear or speak the Word of God, it is in power and with deep conviction from the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Church Board: To appropriate God's Word in power and conviction
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

THE POWERFUL EFFECT OF THE GOSPEL ON THE

Thessalonians assured Paul of God's loving election of them: "because our gospel came to you not only in **word**, but also in **power** and in the **Holy Spirit** and with **full conviction**" (vv.4-5a). In 1 Thessalonians, "the gospel of God" and "the word of God" are used interchangeably (v.5, 1:6, 8; 2:2, 4, 8, 9, 13). Clearly, Paul preached the Gospel through expounding the Scriptures (see Acts 13:16-41) and he did so "in word". Words matter in reading, hearing and speaking the Word of God. The Gospel in the Scriptures has specific contents to be understood through words. The Holy Spirit is at work "in power" through the Word of God, penetrating people's mind, heart, conscience and will. But when the Word of God is rejected, it does not mean the Holy Spirit is not at work. Rejecting the Word of God is resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). The ministry of God's Word has a "life-and-death impact", such that "in spite of failures here and there, the knowledge of God spreads everywhere through the apostolic preaching like an aroma. The preaching generates differing responses – both rejection which leads to death and acceptance which leads to life [2 Cor 2:14-16]."⁴² There is here the Word and the Spirit, and the heart, in play dynamically. So, when we read, hear or speak the Word of God, is there deep and full conviction from the Holy Spirit – being convinced and assured of the Word's truth and relevance – in our hearts?

⁴² David E. Garland, 2 Corinthians, Vol. 29, *The New American Commentary* (B&H, 1999), 135

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SCRIPTURE

[Empty box for Scripture]

OBSERVATION

[Empty box for Observation]

APPLICATION

[Empty box for Application]

PRAYER

[Empty box for Prayer]

THE PAST WEEK

Review

◆ What was my high point and my low point for the week?

[Empty box for high/low point review]

◆ What gave me life and what drained me?

[Empty box for life/drainage review]

◆ How was the Spirit of God at work?

[Empty box for Spirit of God review]

THE PAST WEEK

Reflect

- ◆ What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

Respond

- ◆ What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying? Commit in prayer.

Family Devotional

Week 2

Compassion:
Caring enough to do something about someone else's need.

Memory Verse

"The Lord has shown you what is good. He has told you what he requires of you. You must act with justice. You must love to show mercy. And you must be humble as you live in the sight of your God." - Micah 6:8 (NIRV)

* Bottom Line

Show others that they matter.*

BIBLE STORY VIDEO
<https://cefc.ch/22FD02W2>

* Bible Story

John 4:1-30, 39-42 - Jesus Talks with a Samaritan Woman



* Activity

Everyone Matters

Props: An empty bottle or equivalent

Place the bottle on its side on a table. Then get your family members to take turns spinning it. Identify the person (A) that the bottle points to when it stops spinning. A will then share about the important things that really matter to him or her.

Rule: Focus on what he or she values and NOT on the material things that he or she has.

Say, "Everyone matters in God's eyes. He created us in His image and loves us unconditionally. Everyone has their values and feelings. If we make time to listen and feel for others, we show them that they matter. We do wrong, yet God continues to listen and watch over us. Because we matter to Him."

* Talk About It

- Who were the Samaritans in the Bible? Why were they not welcomed by the Jews?
- Why did Jesus choose to talk to the Samaritan woman?
- What does God say about how we should treat others?
- Why is it important to show others they matter?
- How has someone made you feel like you mattered? What did they do?

Parents: Share with your family members about a situation in which you felt lonely and helpless. Who helped you? What happened? What did you learn from the incident?

* Prayer

Praise God for His love for everyone! Ask God to open our eyes to see those who need our help.

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Adapted by JoshuaWong/CEFC/February2022



MON
14

Biblically, What Is the Gospel?

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; Romans 1:1-4; Colossians 1:28

OBSERVATION

What is Paul's understanding of the Gospel?

APPLICATION

What changes do I need to make in my understanding of the Gospel?

PRAYER

God, I thank You that when I believed in the Gospel, I experienced its power of God for salvation in Christ, the centre of the Gospel. Help me to know what being in Christ is like in reality. Christ died and rose on my behalf, so that I live no longer for myself, but for Christ.⁴³ Empower me by Your Spirit to live as "No longer I, but Christ".

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

THE GREEK WORD FOR "GOSPEL" OR "GOOD NEWS", IS *euaggelion* (the verb: *euaggelizō* – "preach-the-gospel") – a key word repeated six times in 1 Thessalonians (v.5; 2:2, 4, 8, 9; 3:2). The term is used synonymously with "the word of God" (1:6, 8; 2:13). The English words, *evangelise* and *evangelism*, are derived from this Greek term. In our present day, when we say "preach the Gospel", we have in mind non-believers as the audience. But biblically, the Gospel is for both non-believers and believers. The "gospel of God" is "promised beforehand" by God "through His prophets in the holy Scriptures" (Rom 1:1-2). In other words, the Old Testament is the Gospel. In New Testament times, the Gospel was preached through expounding the Scriptures – the Old Testament. The centre of the Gospel is "Jesus Christ our Lord", for the Gospel is "concerning His Son" (Rom 1:3-4). The Old Testament is "everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44); and the New Testament centres on Christ, and hence, "the gospel of Christ" (1 Thess 3:2). So, **the whole Bible is the Gospel**. When Paul preached the Gospel, he did not stop at the conversion of non-believers, but continued to preach and teach it to new believers for growth in discipleship. Paul's ministry of the Gospel is: "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ" (Col 1:28).

⁴³ 2 Corinthians 5:15

TUE
15

The Gospel Seen and Heard

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

OBSERVATION

What do the words of Paul in verses 4 to 5 tell us about him and the Gospel?

APPLICATION

How is the Gospel seen and heard through my life?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for pastors and staff: To live out the Gospel for impactful proclamation
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

HAVING RECALLED FOR THE THESSALONIANS HOW “OUR

gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” (v.4), Paul said to them, “You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake” (v.5). What is the connection? The “in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” in Paul’s proclamation of the Gospel was manifested in “what kind of men we proved to be among you”. For Paul, living out the Gospel precedes proclaiming the Gospel and it was in living out the Gospel that he preached the Gospel. Paul preached the Gospel and “proved” the Gospel by his life. And Paul lived out the Gospel “among you” such that the Thessalonians saw it: “You know.” The “You know” may sound rather presumptuously audacious. But Paul lived out the Gospel in such a way that he could say “You know” with humble and honest certainty and confidence. “No church can spread the Gospel with any degree of integrity, let alone credibility, unless it has been visibly changed by the Gospel it preaches. We need to look like what we are talking about.”⁴⁴ Here is the challenge for the church: “the communicating of the Gospel is by seeing as well as hearing. This double strand runs all through the Bible...Jesus is the Word of God and the image of God. The Word became visible, the image audible...We are familiar enough with the verbal element in evangelism. **Where is the visual?**”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ John R. W. Stott, *Thessalonians*, 44

⁴⁵ John R. W. Stott, *Thessalonians*, 44 – citing Douglas Webster, **emphasis mine**

WED
16Joyful Suffering
in the Spirit

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:6

OBSERVATION

What is suffering "much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit" like?

APPLICATION

What is suffering with the joy of the Holy Spirit like for me?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for Singapore: To come to know that true happiness is found in Christ
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

AT THE MOMENT WHEN THE THESSALONIANS “RECEIVED the word” and “in much affliction” – “in highly distressing circumstances”⁴⁶, they “started out on a path of discipleship that entails imitating Jesus and His apostles”⁴⁷ (v.6). The “affliction” refers to “outward trials and not only the inward anxieties that quite naturally accompany such trials”⁴⁸. For the Thessalonians, it was persecution in the form of “severe social harassment and ostracism” like “their alienation from unbelieving family members and friends; and the curtailment of their opportunities to maintain, let alone to improve, their current economic and social status”⁴⁹. We ought to take suffering – in whatever form – for granted as the normal lot of faithful followers of Jesus, for “through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). The Thessalonians received the Gospel in severe suffering “with the joy of the Holy Spirit” (v.6). This joy in severe suffering is “a manifestation of the supernatural”⁵⁰, for it comes from the Holy Spirit and is not humanly generated. This joy is built in endurance. It is rejoicing “in the Lord” (Phil 4:4) – in union and communion with the Lord. This joy in suffering is possible with a theocentric perspective and attitude, seeing the suffering as the will of God and the “fellowship of His sufferings”, which is part of knowing Christ (Phil 3:10). In his imprisonment, Paul viewed himself as “a prisoner of the Lord”, not of Caesar (Eph 4:1).

⁴⁶ Gary S. Shogren, 66

⁴⁷ Gary S. Shogren, 67

⁴⁸ Jeffrey A. D. Weima, 1-2 Thessalonians, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Baker Academic, 2014), 101

⁴⁹ Jeffrey A. D. Weima, 101

⁵⁰ Gary S. Shogren, 67

THU
17

A Picture of Spiritual Multiplication

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:5-9a

OBSERVATION

How does Paul's ministry to the Thessalonians present a picture of spiritual multiplication?

APPLICATION

How can I grow towards spiritual multiplication in my life?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Outreach/Missions/New Life leaders: To grow towards spiritual multiplication in life and ministry
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

SOON AFTER THE THESSALONIANS BELIEVED IN JESUS, they “became imitators of us [the apostles] and of the Lord” in faithful living (v.6). Paul puts “of us” before “of the Lord”, rather than the reverse, because he, Silas and Timothy were “model copies” of Christ by which Christ was represented and manifested. Paul’s ministry is defined as “my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church”, such that he could make such a bold discipling call: “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 4:16-17; 11:1). Let’s ask ourselves: Do people in my family, my ministry and the community inside and outside the church see Jesus in my life? The Thessalonian young believers in no time grew in spiritual multiplication in their walk with God and the Word of God. Note the progressive spiritual multiplication process in the Word of God: from “our gospel came to you” (v.5), to “you received the message” (v.6) and “the word of the Lord rang out from you” (v.8). And the spiritual multiplication in the walk with God is from “You became **imitators** of us and of the Lord” (v.6) to “You became an **example** to all the believers” when “your faith in God has gone forth everywhere” (v.8). At the IDMC Conference in 2004, a young lady whom I did not know came up to me and said, “David, I would like you to know that I am your third generation disciple.” I discovered that she was discipled by someone whom I discipled from 1981 to 1986, who then became a missionary.

FRI
18

What Is Essentially an Idol?

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:8-9

OBSERVATION

What is an idol and idolatry?

APPLICATION

What are the idols that I need to get rid of or guard against in my life?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for SGI leaders: To be kept from falling into subtle idolatry
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

THERE WAS AN INTERESTING IRONY BETWEEN PAUL AND the Thessalonians. The Thessalonians could not even get a message out to Paul, who was desperate to get some news about them, and so had to send Timothy to them (1 Thess 3:1-2). Yet they somehow managed to circulate the Gospel around Greece, to such an extent that Paul “did not have to start from scratch in his evangelistic efforts in those areas”⁵¹ (vv.8-9). This reflects **the power of God at work**. For the most part, Paul had no need to push his churches to do evangelism, for he was confident that they would continue his missionary activity, as God’s power at work in his preaching of the Gospel continued to be active in those who had believed in Christ.⁵² Many of the newly converted Thessalonians were idolatrous pagans. There were “so many gods and goddesses in Thessalonica that to list them would have taken up the bulk of the letter!”⁵³ So, for the Thessalonians to have “turned to God from idols” was of great significance. Idols are **God-substitutes**. Idols in modern secular society are sophisticated, subtle, pervasive and powerful. There is always, without exception, something that we seek first and most in life. If what we seek first and most is not God and the things of God, but something else, that thing is an idol. Falling short of “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Matt 6:33) will inevitably lead to worshipping an idol. And mostly, we are not conscious of this idolatrous worship.

⁵¹ G. K. Beale, 60

⁵² Gary S. Shogren, 71

⁵³ Gary S. Shogren, 71

SAT
19

Active Serving and Patient Waiting

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

OBSERVATION

What is the relationship between "to serve" God and "to wait for His Son from heaven"?

APPLICATION

What does it mean for me to serve God eschatologically?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Church Board: To live life and serve God with an assured future
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

THE GOD WHOM THE THESSALONIANS HAD TURNED TO

from idols is "true and living", in stark contrast to idols that are false and dead gods. This turning to God must lead to "to serve" God (v.9). The claim of turning to God from idols without resulting in serving God is "manifestly bogus"⁵⁴. Is being "a servant of Christ Jesus" (Rom 1:1) in my dominant consciousness? "To serve" God and "to wait" for Christ's return go together (vv.9b-10). This "to wait" refers to "waiting for God's intervention"⁵⁵. The Gospel message is "inherently eschatological"⁵⁶: believers await the future intervention of God in this dark, evil and chaotic world through Christ who "delivers us from the wrath to come", which is the final stage of our salvation. God's wrath is "neither an impersonal process of cause and effect... nor a passionate, arbitrary or vindictive outburst of temper, but His holy and uncompromising antagonism to evil, with which He refuses to negotiate"⁵⁷. However, God is "slow to anger" (Nah 1:2-3); so, we have to wait patiently. Active serving and patient waiting balances each other. There are limits to what we can accomplish in serving God redemptively to change the world. We can improve society; we cannot perfect it. For there to be a perfect world, we have to wait for Christ's return, when He will establish "new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells" (2 Pet 3:13). So, we serve God eschatologically – being realistic with the present and assured of the future.

⁵⁴ John R. W. Stott, 41

⁵⁵ Gary S. Shogren, 74

⁵⁶ Gary S. Shogren, 74

⁵⁷ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 41

SUN
20

SUNDAY JOURNAL

SCRIPTURE

OBSERVATION

APPLICATION

PRAYER

THE PAST WEEK

Review

◆ What was my high point and my low point for the week?

◆ What gave me life and what drained me?

◆ How was the Spirit of God at work?

THE PAST WEEK

Reflect

- ◆ What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

Respond

- ◆ What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying? Commit in prayer.

Family Devotional

Week 3

Compassion:
Caring enough to do something about someone else's need.

Memory Verse

"The Lord has shown you what is good. He has told you what he requires of you. You must act with justice. You must love to show mercy. And you must be humble as you live in the sight of your God." - Micah 6:8 (NIRV)

* Bottom Line

Use what you have to help others.*

* Bible Story

John 6:1-13 - Jesus Feeds the 5,000

* Activity

Do Good with What You Have

Props: Pipe Cleaners or equivalent
Provide each family member with a pipe cleaner.
Ask: "What do you have to help others?"

Get everyone to create ONE thing that they have using the pipe cleaner. Ask your family members to share what they created and how they will use it to help others.

Say, "Everything we have is given by God. God gives us these gifts, not only for our comfort but to use what He gives us to help others."

* Talk About It

- What did you learn from the Scriptures today?
- Who gives you the things you have now?
- In your opinion, do we need to have a lot to help or give to others? Why or why not?
- What do you have now which can help or give to others?
- How does God want us to use our gifts?

Parents: Share with your family members about an incident when you were lost and a friend offered to help you. What happened? What did the friend use to help you? What surprised you in this incident?

* Prayer

Thank God for all the things He has given to us. Ask God to show us the people who need our help. Pray for a compassionate heart to help others with what we have.

BIBLE STORY VIDEO
<https://cefc.ch/22FD02W3>



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MON
21

The Gospel Facing Strong Opposition

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2; Acts 16:16-24

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about Paul's experience as described in verses 1 to 2?

APPLICATION

What does it mean to me to be bold in God in living out and proclaiming the Gospel?

PRAYER

O God, fill me and empower me by the Holy Spirit, that I may be bold in being a witness for Christ by living out and proclaiming the Gospel. I ask of You that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the Gospel, as I ought to speak.⁵⁸ Help me not to lose heart when the Gospel is being opposed or rejected.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

PAUL PREACHED THE GOSPEL AT PHILIPPI AND PLANTED a church there before going to Thessalonica. At Philippi, Paul and Silas “suffered and were shamefully treated” (v.2). They suffered both injury and insult from people who opposed them for preaching the Gospel. They were being “dragged” to the magistrates, who “tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods”, and they were inflicted with “many blows” before they were thrown into prison, with their feet fastened in the stocks (Acts 16:19-24). It was an extremely painful and humiliating experience, being flogged naked in public and imprisoned, and without trial.⁵⁹ Paul was “shamefully treated”, but he was “not ashamed of the gospel” (cf. Rom 1:16). Instead, the shameful suffering resulted in “boldness” in preaching the Gospel in Thessalonica (v.2). To speak in “boldness” means “to speak freely, openly and fearlessly”, with “outspokenness, frankness and plainness of speech”, and “so with courage”⁶⁰. Paul preached the Gospel with “boldness” in two spheres. Firstly, “in the face of strong opposition” (v.2, NIV), and more importantly, “in our God” (v.2) – that is, in the presence of God. And this is God’s empowering presence that gives the boldness (cf. Acts 4:29-31). “If we have boldness before God in what we do for Him, it is a small thing to be brave towards mere humans in carrying on God’s work.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ Ephesians 6:19-20

⁵⁹ John R. W. Stott, *Thessalonians*, 48

⁶⁰ John R. W. Stott, *Thessalonians*, 47

⁶¹ G. K. Beale, 65

TUE
22

Confident Self-Defence Against Character Attack

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 2:3, 5; Acts 17:5-9

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about the character of Paul in verses 3 and 5?

APPLICATION

What changes do I need to make in my life with regards to integrity?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for pastors and staff: To live life and serve God and people with integrity
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

PAUL'S BRIEF MISSION IN THESSALONICA CAME TO

“an ignominious end. The public riot and the legal charges against the missionaries were so serious that they were persuaded to make a humiliating night flight from the city [Acts 17:5-9]. Paul's critics took full advantage of his sudden disappearance. In order to undermine his authority and his Gospel, they determined to discredit him. So they launched a malicious smear campaign”⁶². And “it seems likely that some of the Thessalonians were being carried away by this torrent of abuse”⁶³. This was the background to Paul's self-defence of his integrity in the letter (1 Thess 2:3-6): “our appeal does not spring from...” (v.3) and “we never came with...” (v.5). Paul defends himself in three ways. Firstly, **the message (what we say) is true**. It “does not spring from error” (v.3). And Paul did not use “words of flattery” (v.5) – “the tortuous methods by which one man seeks to gain influence over another, generally for selfish ends”⁶⁴. Secondly, **the motive (why we say what we say) is pure**. Paul's ministry among the Thessalonians was not out of “impure motives” (v.3, NIV) – like ambition, pride and popularity.⁶⁵ And it was not “with a pretext for greed” (v.5). Thirdly, **the methods (how we say what we say) are open**: There was “not any attempt to deceive” (v.3) – to induce conversions by concealing the cost of discipleship, offering fraudulent blessings,⁶⁶ or making the Gospel appealing to human wants and ways, and easy to believe in Jesus.

⁶² John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 45

⁶³ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 46

⁶⁴ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 51 – citing George Milligan

⁶⁵ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 51

⁶⁶ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 50

WED
23

A God-Centred Life and Ministry

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 2:3-5

OBSERVATION

How is God-centredness evident in Paul's life and ministry?

APPLICATION

What does it mean for me to be approved by God and entrusted with the Gospel?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for Singapore: To see and recognise God as the centre of the universe
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

FOR PAUL, THE TRUTHFULNESS OF HIS MESSAGE (VV.3, 5A), the purity of his motive (vv.3, 5) and the openness of his methods in his ministry of the Gospel stem from one fundamental reality: **God-centredness**. Paul's defence of his integrity is built on "just as we have been approved by **God**" (v.4). The word for "approved" is *dokimazō*, which means "to put to the test, examine, and especially, as a result of the examination, to approve or accept as proved to be fitting; to test to find genuine"⁶⁷. *Dokimazō* occurs twice in the verse: in the perfect tense – "have been approved by God" and in the present continuous tense – "God who tests". Being "approved by God" at one point of one's life is not final. The divine testing and approving is an ongoing reality. And the object of this divine testing and approving is "**our hearts**". Can we be certain like Paul about God's approval of us? Having been "approved by God", Paul was "entrusted with the gospel [by **God**]" (v.4). God trusted Paul to be a trustworthy steward of the Gospel to faithfully preach and teach it, and to do so accurately, without distorting or compromising the truth of the Gospel and turn it into "a different gospel" and "another Jesus" (2 Cor 11:4). In recent years, when I teach about God, I have to deliberately emphasise, "God, as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures." For oftentimes, the God Christians talk about is a cultural God created in the image of the world.

⁶⁷ John R. W. Stott, *Thessalonians*, 50

THU
24

A True Servant of Christ

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 6; Galatians 1:10

OBSERVATION

What characterises a true servant of Christ?

APPLICATION

How do I deal with the temptation or struggle with seeking human approval and human applause?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Outreach/Missions/New Life leaders: To serve God according to His will and to His glory
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

“**NO SECRET OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS MORE IMPORTANT** than its fundamental God-centredness”⁶⁸ – where a person who serves God is tested by God, approved by God, trusted by God and is seeking to please God. With regards to pleasing God in his life and ministry, Paul gives particular attention to two contrasts, which are common enticement and ensnarement to us: “to please man” (v.4) and to “seek glory from people” (v.6). It is true of us all that in all that we do, we desire to see accomplishment in terms of good or even great results. And oftentimes, the results that we desire to see are visible and tangible. As they are, these things are not necessarily right or wrong. However, the problem arises when behind these things is the inner seeking to please people – human approval; and seeking glory from people – human applause. And quite inevitably, comparing and competing with others become part of the problem. The test is, how do I feel about myself, what do I think of myself and how do I respond, when the results of what I have done – having done my level best – turn out to be poor, along with judgment and criticism from others? Like Paul (Gal 1:10), ask ourselves two self-examination questions: “Am I now seeking the approval of man or of God? Am I trying to please man?” Is this my conviction of what a true servant of Christ is: “If I were still trying to please man, **I will not be a servant of Christ**”?

⁶⁸ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 50

FRI
25

Certain Key Characteristics of Disciplemaking

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 2:6-8

OBSERVATION

What characterised Paul's ministry to the Thessalonians?

APPLICATION

Which of the characteristics of Paul's ministry are relevant to me, and what will I do about that?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for SGI leaders: To serve God and people from the inside out
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTERS 2 AND 3 GIVE US INSIGHT

into Paul's disciplemaking ministry and his pastoral heart. We can identify from verses 6 to 8 four key characteristics of Paul's disciplemaking ministry. **Being:** Paul could have asserted his God-given apostolic authority to demand contributions from the Thessalonians (v.6; cf. 1 Cor 9:13-14), but he chose not to. Instead, he was "gentle" among them. This is serving out of the being – out of Christlike character. Paul's gentleness was "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor 10:1). **Caring:** To the Thessalonians, Paul was "like a nursing mother taking care of her own children" (v.7). The expressions "nursing mother" – a woman breast-feeding children and "own children" point to a close relationship, a deep sense of ownership, commitment and responsibility, and "knowing best how to care"⁶⁹. It is caring for the well-being of a person in all aspects of life. **Loving:** The description with a double emphasis, "being affectionately desirous of you" and "you had become very dear to us" shows the depth and intensity of Paul's love. It is really quite something for Paul to say this about himself. Leadership Mentor Edmund Chan says, "The measure of ministry is love." This doubly emphasised love is manifested in **Giving** of "our own selves", along with "the gospel" (v.8). Biblical love is "love and give oneself up", as demonstrated by God Himself (Jn 3:16; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2, 25).

⁶⁹ Gary S. Shogren, 104

SAT
26

You Ought to Be Teachers

SCRIPTURE Hebrews 5:11-6:2; Matthew 28:19-20

OBSERVATION

What does Hebrews 5:11-6:2 say about spiritual maturity?

APPLICATION

What do I want to do about my maturing in Christ and discipling someone?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Church Board: To teach others out of authentic living for Christ
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

CAN YOU SAY TO YOURSELF, “I AM A DISCIPLEMAKER”

and consciously know what you mean by that? A key component in discipling is teaching: “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20). The writer of Hebrews says to his readers: “by this time you ought to be teachers” (v.12). He is not speaking to a group of gifted teachers who are not teaching, but addressing Christians in general who are not growing. The presupposition behind these words is: a Christian should be growing in such a way that **by a certain “time”** they **“ought to be”** teaching others. So, biblically, the basic ministry of a growing Christian is teaching. The least we can do is to teach one spiritually younger Christian. Being a few steps ahead in knowledge and experience, we can disciple someone less mature. God intends for every believer to be a disciple of Christ who discipled others. We are to mature towards discipling. Are you maturing? If you are not, then “press on to maturity” (Heb 6:1). If you are, then disciple someone. As a 16-year old boy and just 5-months old in the faith, while being disciplined by a Navigator, I was discipling others. One day, someone asked me, “David, how many guys are you helping?” I answered matter-of-factly, “Thirteen.” And that person responded, “Wow! You’re greater than Jesus!” I just simply shared with “my disciples” what I learned from my discipler and from my personal intake of God’s Word.

SUN
27

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SCRIPTURE

OBSERVATION

APPLICATION

PRAYER

THE PAST WEEK

Review

◆ What was my high point and my low point for the week?

◆ What gave me life and what drained me?

◆ How was the Spirit of God at work?

THE PAST WEEK

Reflect

- ◆ What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

Respond

- ◆ What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying? Commit in prayer.

Family Devotional

Week 4

Compassion:

Caring enough to do something about someone else's need.

Memory Verse

"The Lord has shown you what is good. He has told you what he requires of you. You must act with justice. You must love to show mercy. And you must be humble as you live in the sight of your God." - Micah 6:8 (NIRV)

* Bottom Line

Make time to help others.*

* Bible Story

Mark 10:46-52 - Jesus Heals Bartimaeus

* Activity

How Do You Use Your Time?

Props: Paper plates and colour pencils or markers

Ask each family member to draw a pie chart on a paper plate and indicate how they use their time during their waking hours.

Discuss:

- How much time is used for entertainment?
- How much time is used to communicate with God?
- How much time is used to help others?

Say, "No matter how big or small our prayer is, God makes time to listen. We don't need to have a lot to make time for others. Sometimes, we can take a minute to give a word of encouragement to a friend who is upset."

* Talk About It

- What gets in our way of making time for others?
- Who did Jesus make time for?
- What did you learn from Jesus about showing compassion?
- Think of a time when someone helped you. How did it make you feel?
- How do you think it affects other people when we slow down to make time for them?

Parents: Share with your family members about a time when you needed help but no one listened to you. Who helped you in the end? How did it make you feel when someone made time for you?

* Prayer

Thank God for being there with us all the time. Ask God to show us where we can help and serve others. Pray for a willing and godly heart to make time to serve others who need help.

BIBLE STORY VIDEO
<https://cefc.ch/22FD02W4>



MON
28

Disciple the Generations

SCRIPTURE Psalm 145:1-7

OBSERVATION

How do the Psalmist and God's people behave in relation to Him and to people in other generations?

APPLICATION

How will I commit myself to make the Lord known to the generations and disciple both the young and old in this new year?

PRAYER

O Lord my God, I want to praise You like the Psalmist. Teach me to praise you every day with my whole being and for my whole life. May Your people always praise You, for You alone are worthy of all our praises! Help us to continually proclaim Your greatness and goodness to others, and faithfully tell of Your mighty acts and wondrous works to all generations. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

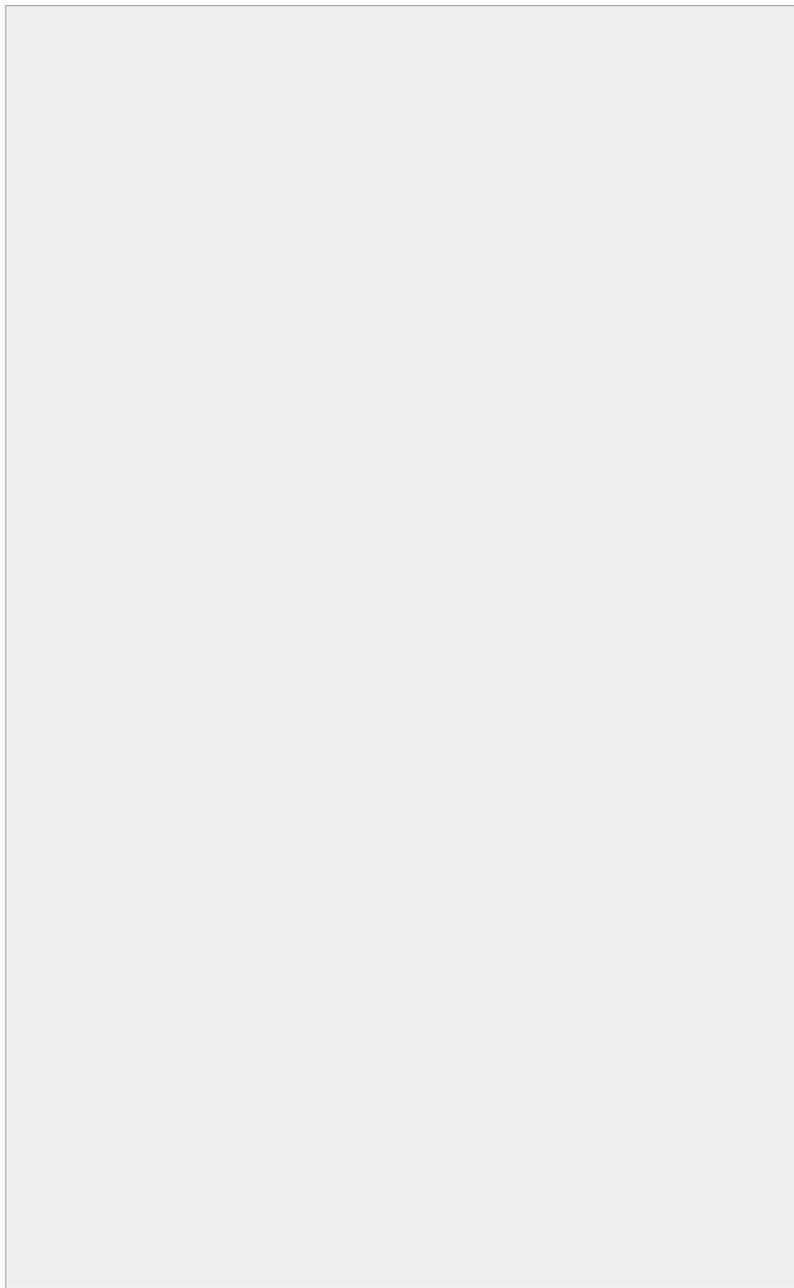
DISCIPLE THE GENERATIONS – THAT IS COVENANT EFC'S

Faith Exploit 1. The overarching reason why Christians must disciple the generations is that **Jesus Christ is returning soon**. We must therefore prepare the people of every generation to meet King Jesus. We do so by discipling the generations to (1) have a genuine faith in the Lord Jesus and (2) be a faithful witness for Him.

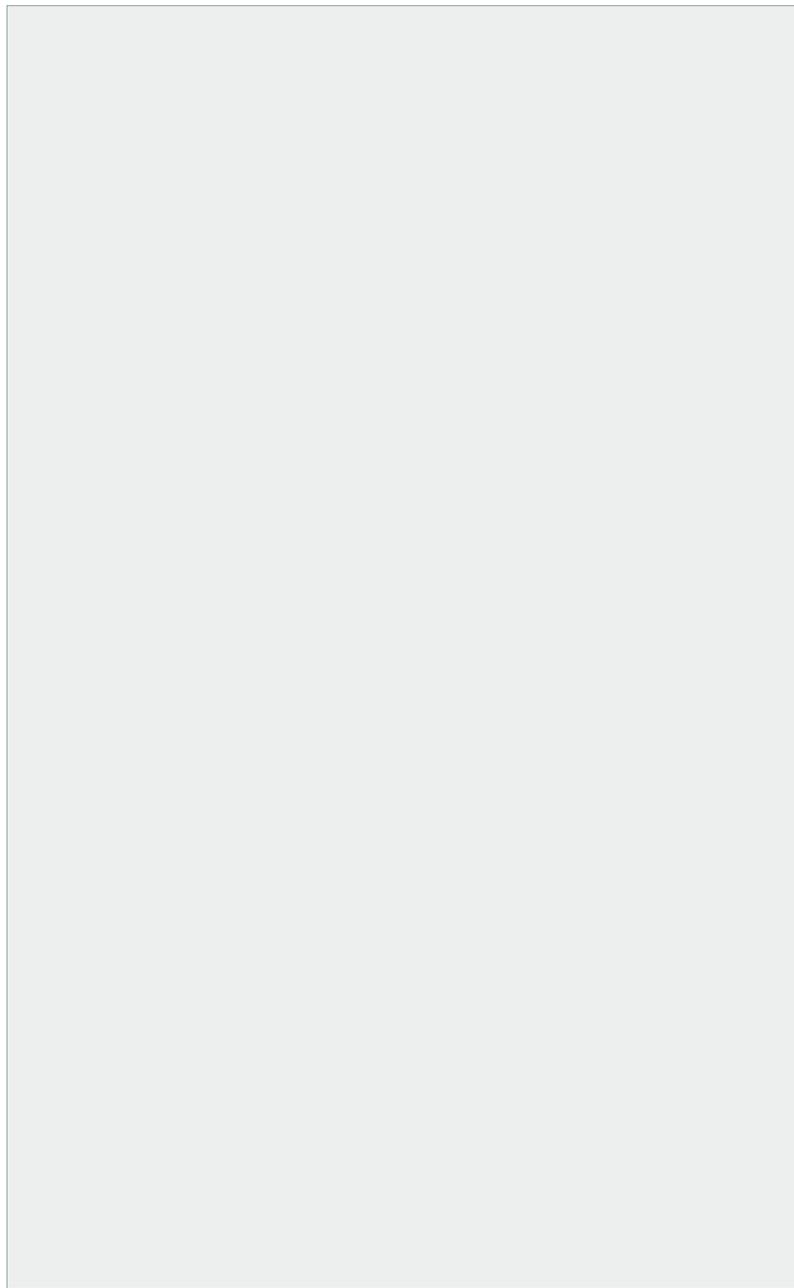
The disciple's **genuine faith in Jesus** is seen in the way he praises God. He praises God every day, not just on Sunday; indeed, he desires to praise God for the rest of his life and eternity (vv.1-2)! The true believer's praises to God are not just heard from her voice, but also seen in her ventures. Genuine disciples praise God because they truly view God as incomparably great and the One who alone is worthy of praise (v.3). The disciple's **faithful witness for Jesus** is seen in how he recalls and recounts God's "mighty acts" and "wondrous works" done in the past (vv.4-7). Faithful Christians tell other generations: "God is great and good! He has done marvellous things in our lives, especially saving us through Christ from our sins!" And they keep passing on the stories of God!

When Christ returns, He will judge the living and the dead for all their deeds done while alive. The Lord will call His disciples to account for the stewardship of their lives – their time, talents, spiritual gifts, influence, money and material resources. Have you been making disciples for His glory? How will you disciple both the young and old in your sphere of influence this year?

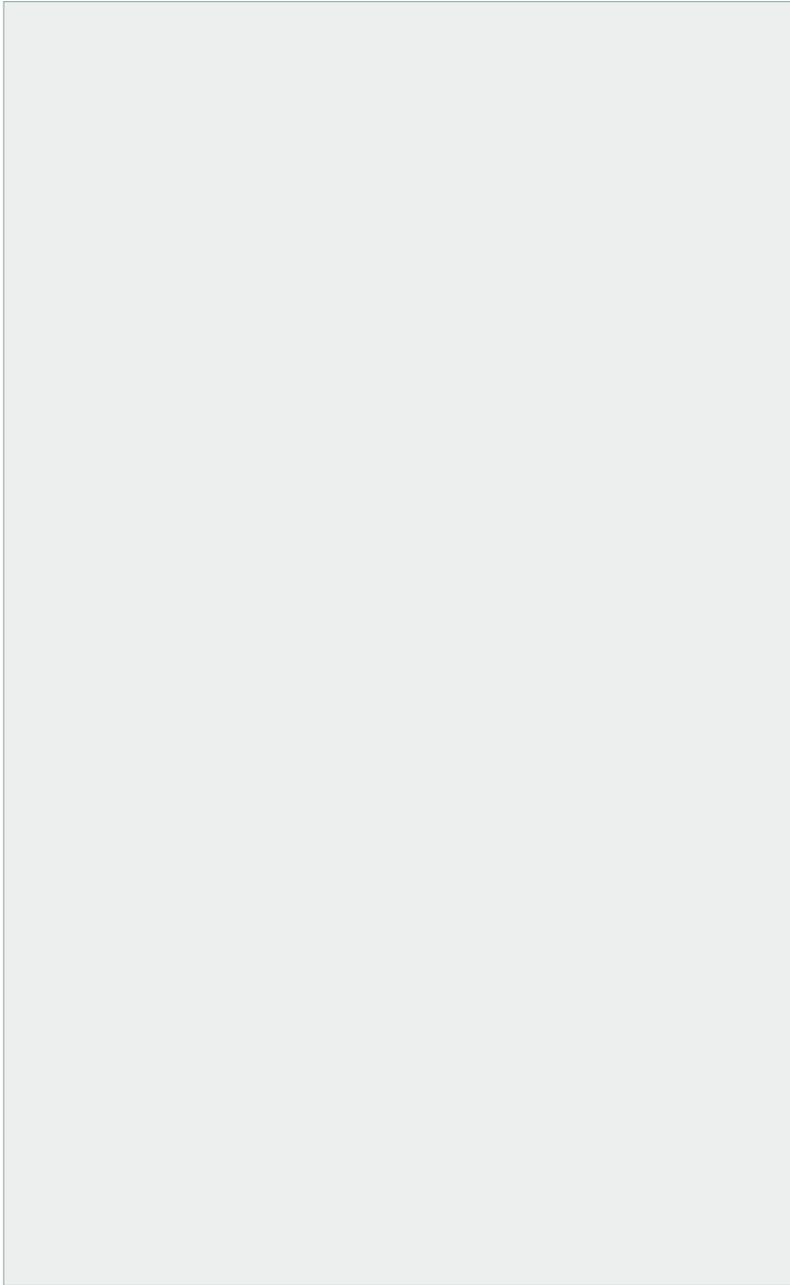
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