

1 THESSALONIANS STUDY — GEN 1 TO GEN 2

Use the first two chapters of 1 Thessalonians to learn about Paul's church-planting methods in one of the movements recorded in the Bible. Before and after the study, ask the Lord, "Open our minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:35). As you go through the study, and afterwards, ask the Lord (then write down and discuss):

- What do You want us to learn from this?
- How would these principles look lived out in our own local context?
- How do You say it should impact our approach to ministry overall?
- How do You want it to inform our discipleship and leadership development process?
- How might it inform our next steps?
- How were You involved in the growth of the Thessalonian movement? How can we pray accordingly for the work here?
- Invite the Lord's counsel into changes that we consider.

As you take steps forward, remember that Paul planted, and Apollos watered, but God gave the growth (1 Cor. 3:6). Continually ask the Lord to cause growth as your team and partners do the work He shows you to do.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 to 2:12

Many people think that the only thing needed is a good gospel presentation. Others suggest that if we have "power encounters" or perform miracles, churches will definitely emerge. Still others say we must "testify by our lives". Apparently Paul thought all these options were wrong—and all were right.

In this passage, Paul describes his church-planting methods to the Thessalonians, a place where one church-planting movement was occurring at the time. Spend time considering this passage together to discern hidden keys to Paul's fruitfulness in church planting.

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you.

²We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. ³We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

2 You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. ²We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. ³For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. ⁴On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. ⁶We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. ⁷Instead, we were like young children^(a) among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, ⁸so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. ⁹Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. ¹⁰You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹²encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.