

We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. Because our gospel came to you not simply with words but with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. We 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. Instead, we were like young children among you, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom

and glorify. May he strengthen you and holy in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his holy ones. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality. And to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and your hands, you. Brothers do not want

informed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still

alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will

be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words. Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. For God did not appoint us

Objectives: We want to learn Paul's pattern for praising God and put it into practice.

Launch: Who read 1 Thess through once this week?

Explore: (1 Thess. 1:1-4)

Read 1 Thess. 1

- What is the big idea of the passage? How do you know? (*Paul is thankful that God has chosen them. He shares the evidence that he sees in their lives.*)
- What criteria do you use to determine if someone is a Christian or not?
- Next week we are going to look very closely at the criteria Paul used. I think it will challenge us...
- For this week, I want to devote some time to practice Paul's pattern for praising God. Thanksgiving is a major theme in this book. 1:2-2:12; 2:13; 3:9
- How does Paul thank God? (*always, continually, remembering them in prayer-seems that Paul had a regular prayer time in which he thanked God for his disciples*)
- What does Paul thank God for? (*Ultimately he is thanking God that they are true end time believers. Specifically, he is thankful for their work of faith, labor of love, steadfastness of hope*)
- We will look closer at each thing he lists, but first how would you summarize what Paul is doing? (*He is giving thanks for the unquantifiable realities which are needed to inspire good works that we can see and measure*)

1. What is "work produced by faith" (NIV)? (*deeds done in service to the Lord- 1 Cor. 15:58*)

- What are some of the works he mentions that they were a part of? (*1:8, 2:10, 2:13, 3:2, 3:5-7, 3:10, 4:14, 5:8*)
2. What is labor prompted by love? (*seems very similar as work. The difference is that love is the motivator*)
 - Is labor prompted by love necessary for genuine believers or is it a bonus? (*see 1 John 3:11-20*)
 3. What is endurance/steadfastness of hope? (*faith that endures even in the face of trials*)
 - What is their hope based on (*the Lord Jesus and His return*).
 - Normally this same list goes faith, hope and love. Why is hope last this time? (*hope was what they needed the most since they were being persecuted*).

Apply

- How is Paul able to thank God in this way? (*He was aware of their deeds and through prayerful contemplation he was able to identify the motives for the deeds*).
- What needs to change in your life so that you are able to pray like this?
- Take some time now to apply this pattern for some of the guys you lead.
- Set aside Monday for contemplative prayer for guys we lead?

Homework:

-Contact and thank a person that proclaimed the gospel to you.