

CLOSER LOOK



A LIFEGROUP STUDY ON THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOT WITHOUT HOPE
I THESSALONIANS 3:1-5
JANUARY 22, 2023

MAIN POINT

JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF ENDURING HOPE

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is something (or someone) you have put your hope in that has let you down? How has that challenge changed your perspective of being dependent on God?

Think about someone you deeply care about. Have you ever felt concerned that they may be distant from God? How did you handle this situation?

Note: Encourage the group to share their thoughts and experiences as you feel comfortable.

UNDERSTANDING

Review the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 (Note: This passage was from last week)

Based on Paul's message from last week (1 Thess. 2:13-16), what does it mean to "receive" God's true Word?

He highlights the difference between hearing the words of the truth versus really embracing them, allowing them to transform your heart. This is a conversation focused on one's outward display vs. the position of their heart. God is clear through Scripture that His desire is for our heart's to be changed.

Read Matthew 13:18-23. What distinction does Jesus make between the seed on the rocky ground or thorns and the seed fallen on good soil? In the face of temptation and/or persecution, how have the Thessalonians demonstrated their hearts have fallen on good soil?

The Thessalonians demonstrate they've understood the word because Paul testifies that they've received the word "not as human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea..." (1 Thess. 2:13,14). The transformation of their hearts has stirred them up, producing the fruit of their faithful actions for God's churches. They've demonstrated understanding and responded to their call by walking in a manner worthy of God (1 Thess. 2:12).

Have a volunteer read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

What does Paul's concern and urgency for the Thessalonians say about his character (v5)? How does his response reflect the character of Christ?

Paul's concern demonstrates his deep care and love for the Thessalonians. He is urgent to get an update about their spiritual growth and the Church's health. Paul shows evidence of his main motivator: to see the Gospel spread. Much like our Heavenly Father, Paul reflects His desire to see our hearts be transformed and our lives be a testament to this change.

In what ways does the hope of Christ sustain the Thessalonians that received the Truth versus those of the Jews that rejected this hope and attempted to keep the Gospel from reaching the Gentiles?

Where the strength of our humanity runs out, God fills in the gap. The Thessalonians are offered sustenance throughout hardship and persecution because of God's promises. Namely, His promise to be with us in each step we take (Psalm 23:1-6).

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How have you personally experienced cultural opposition to your Christian values? In what ways do you feel equipped and in what ways do you feel unequipped to respond in a Christ-like manner?

How is your hope in Christ sustaining you as you experience this opposition?

PRAYER WITH YOUR GROUP

Take a moment to ask your group if there are any prayer requests. Please consider praying for the following:

- **Our Neighbors:** Pray for an opportunity to invite one of your neighbors to Lifepoint
- **Our Nations:** Our Uganda mission trip January 25-February 2. Pray that lives will be changed for the sake of the Kingdom
- **Our Next Generation:** Pray for our students as they navigate difficult challenges at school
- **Our Church Body:** That we will grow deeper in faith as we read and study I Thessalonians together

LP REMINDERS

Please encourage everyone to register for the following items under the "Events" tab on the Lifepoint App or LPGuest.com

- January 27-28: 1825 Winter Conference
- February 12: Starting Point
- February 19: Core Beliefs
- February 26: Discovering Life Membership Class

MEMORIZE

"And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints."

I Thessalonians 3:12-13