

LEADER OVERVIEW - MARCH WEEK 1

Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

Objective: For Young Adults to understand and live out the loving community that God designed for His Kingdom.

Text Overview: In this passage, Paul is concerned with reassuring the Thessalonian church of his affection and love towards them. The Thessalonians have begun to doubt Paul's authenticity since he has been away from them longer than expected. Verses 7-12 hone in on Paul's nurturing relationship with the Thessalonian church as an example we should follow with one another.

Text Explanation: Repeatedly Paul reminds the Thessalonians how his missionary team acted towards the Thessalonians when they were together: "[W]e were gentle among you, like a nursing mother... being affectionately desirous of you... we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you... we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you..." Paul writes so that the Thessalonians can see his pure motives in coming to them to preach the gospel. He is not motivated by his own glory, or by some scheme to get rich, but he is motivated by his love for them. Additionally, Paul wants to set an example for what Christ-like relationships are to look like. Through his love and affection for the Thessalonian church, he is encouraging them to imitate that love and affection in their relationships with one another.

Discussion Instructions: The first three questions focus on discussing and unpacking the passage. Depending on where your group's discussion leads, question 1 may cover the topics addressed in questions 2 and 3. However, use your own discretion with questions 2 and 3 to guide the discussion. Questions 4 and 5 are intended to take the passage and make it personal to your group.

Later in 1 Thessalonians, Paul commends the Thessalonians for already loving one another well. But then he commands them "to do this [love] more and more." It is possible your group is already loving one another well, but how can you and your co-leader challenge your group "to do this more and more?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - MARCH WEEK 1

Read 1 Thessalonians 2 (Context)

Say: “Thessalonica was a bustling port city and capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. In this letter Paul writes to the Thessalonian church he already has an existing relationship with. Paul, along with his missionary team, has been trying to visit the Thessalonian church repeatedly, but their journey continues to be thwarted. As a result, the Thessalonian church is beginning to doubt Paul’s authenticity as an apostle. Paul writes 1 Thessalonians to reassure the Thessalonian church of his love for them and to reassure them on questions they have about Christ’s return. He wants them be confident in their salvation when Christ returns, so that they can focus on right living in the Body of Christ.”

Reread 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 (Focus)

1. As a group, underline (or list out loud) all the characteristics Paul exhibited to the Thessalonians (e.g. “gentle,” or “affectionately desirous”). Which of these characteristics resonates most with you?
2. What did Paul mean when he said, “we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves?”
3. Paul gives the metaphor of a nursing mother in v. 7 and of a father with his children in v. 11. What message is Paul trying to convey through these different images?
4. In this passage, we see Paul so freely and passionately express his love for this community. How do we cultivate this type of love in our Home Group?
5. What barriers do you have to expressing or accepting this type of love?