



Finer Grounds Bible Study

1 & 2 Thessalonians Lesson 2: 1 Thessalonians 1

Today we begin our examination of the text of 1 Thessalonians. It will benefit you greatly if you take a few minutes and read through the entire letter of 1 Thessalonians before we begin, this will allow you to continue to keep the context in your head as we break down each passage.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-4

When reading through the epistles, we often breeze through these introductory remarks in order to get to the meat of the letter. However, in doing this, we often miss some important thoughts. Paul often takes the opportunity in the opening lines to introduce the main focus of his letters.

What three specific things did Paul give thanks to God for concerning the Thessalonians?

Notice that Paul centers his prayer around three important Christian virtues: faith, love, and hope. These are the building blocks of our relationship with Christ and will serve as an important theme throughout the letter.

It is clear from this verse that Paul is proud of the actions of these new Christians, they were doing work that was demonstrating the characteristics of true followers of God. “Work of faith” and “labor of love” are extremely active

terms. Their faith and love were evident to Timothy and everyone around them.

If Paul were to receive a report about us, what would it look like? Would he be able to give thanks for our “work of faith” and “labor of love?”

What is one thing you can do this week to make your faith in God more evident to all around you?

What is one thing you can do this week to make your love for others more evident to all around you?

This last area, “steadfastness of hope,” is such an important one. The word steadfastness, some versions render patience, but it is much more than that. In the original Greek, this word is HYPOMONE; it refers to the ability to hold up under enormous pressure or endure hardship (Ardnt, Danker and Bauer).



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Think back to our introductory lesson; why is this particular quality vital to the success and growth of the church in Thessalonica?

Why is hope in Christ linked with the concept of steadfastness?

Paul is incredibly thankful that through all of the persecution and hardship these young Christians have faced, they have maintained their hope and it has helped them stand firm and not buckle under the extreme pressure they are facing. This congregation would serve as lights to those around them because they kept their focus on what was truly important.

What are some of the things in this world that can threaten our steadfastness as Christians if we are not careful?

How can fixing our mind on our hope in Christ help us in these situations?

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

Throughout this letter, Paul will spend much time reminding the Thessalonians the things which they already know. In the situation they find themselves in, it would be easy to start

doubting and wondering why you chose this path to begin with. Paul wanted to be sure that they remembered the conviction they had the first time they heard the gospel. The implication from 1 Thessalonians 1:5 is that Paul and his companions had proven their message with the power of the Holy Spirit and those in Thessalonica had been first hand witnesses.

If you are a Bible Marker, mark each time that Paul uses the phrase “you know” or something similar throughout this letter. If you don’t mark in your Bible, make note of these on a separate sheet of paper.

Throughout this letter, Paul emphasizes things that they know but he wants them to remember. He wants them to remember the conviction they had when they first became Christians, he wants them to remember the massive changes they made in their lives, and he wants them to remember the people they have influenced.

What are some things that we are worth reminding ourselves concerning our early Christian walk?

While we should be spiritually maturing each day, there are still some things our younger Christian selves can teach us. Do you remember what it felt like to come up out of the waters of baptism? Do you remember what it felt like when you fully realized what Jesus had done for you? Sometimes we fall into the trap of knowing these things intellectually but forgetting the passion we once had. We must never forget, it is that passion



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and deep love for Christ and his people that will attract others to the Church and give us motivation to stay faithful.

According to this passage, what influence had the Thessalonians had on the surrounding area?

Macedonia and Achaia were the two providences in Greece. The impact this young congregation had was huge. The phrase “sounded forth” is in the perfect tense in the Greek which implies that the action is continuous. In other words, the influence they have on the world around them is continuous. In fact, when Paul and his companions visit these places, they hear about the strength of the Christians in Thessalonica. What an encouragement that must have been to Paul, who was so worried about these Christians he had left in such a precarious situation.

This congregation of God’s people in Thessalonica was amazing; in the midst of persecution, they left behind everything and the idols they once served and gave their hearts completely to the cause of Christ. This dramatic change of actions and attitudes was noticed throughout the world. It is likely that these Christians in Thessalonica had no idea of their reach until Paul penned these words. So often, we go about our day to day lives, unaware of how much our actions influence others. Each of us have unique opportunities and relationships. You have a circle of influence that no one else has.

Why is it important to always keep in mind the way our lives influence those around us?

What are some ways others have influenced and encouraged you when they probably didn’t know they were doing so?

What are some opportunities that you have in which you could influence others for good?

As you go about your week keep in mind that you are an influencer! The way you withstand the trails laid before you can either hurt or help the cause of Christ. The things that you say and do during the week can either damage or build up the image of the church in the community. Take a moment and remember why you became a Christian in the first place, remember your zeal and passion for God’s truth, and strive to be a light to all those around you just like the Christians in Thessalonica.