

## Small Group Study: What does it mean to be a Christian?

---

**Opening Prayer:** Father God, as we begin this study we ask that your Spirit would be present with us. And that you would reveal your truth to us through your word. We ask that you would convict us of your truth and empower us to obey your Word. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.

Memory - Meditation Verse: "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." Hebrews 10:23

### Opening Discussion:

- What do you think it means to be a Christian?

Have people share as an opening dialog

- What does a disciple of Jesus look like?

Have people describe what someone who follows Jesus should be like. Remind them that we are all disciples of Jesus and this should be a lesson to us about how we live and act.

### Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

<sup>1</sup> Paul, Silas and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

<sup>2</sup> We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. <sup>3</sup> We 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.

<sup>4</sup> For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup> because 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. <sup>6</sup> You 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. <sup>7</sup> And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. <sup>8</sup> The 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, <sup>9</sup> for 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, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

- What does verse 3 indicate is evident in a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Disciples of Jesus should live and produce good works out of faith (trust towards God). Their labor should be done in and because of love. They should demonstrate endurance inspired by hope meaning that they don't grow weary or give up because they know that God is for us because Jesus is our LORD.

- In verse 5 Paul mentions that the gospel came to them with power, the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. What does that mean?

The gospel is so much more than a few nice words or a good message. It is the power of God at work in those who hear it and receive it. The Holy Spirit takes the gospel and not only delivers a message to us but he delivers at transformation to us through the Gospel message. But this verse indicates it comes with deep convictions which means that I not only hear and speak the word of God but I embrace and believe the word of God.

- From reading this passage, what becomes apparent about the Church of the Thessalonians?

They were transformed by the gospel. They lived out the word of God.

- What are a few things that Paul points out about the Church?

They became imitators of the disciples and of Jesus. They welcomed the message with joy. They willingly and joyfully suffered because of the gospel. They became a model for other believers. They became messengers of the gospel because of their faith, their life transformation and their testimony. Their lives were completely changed from idol worshippers to authentic committed followers of Jesus.

- How did that demonstrate their faith?

The change in their lives became so radical and evident that anyone watching knew it must be really real.

- How was the Church of the Thessalonians living out their faith in Jesus?

By living a transformed life and living it full of joy.

- How should we live our lives once we have heard and received the gospel of Jesus Christ?

By living out a transformed life full of joy.

- Why do you think our actions inspired by faith speak louder than our words?

It is said more is caught than taught. That is certainly the case with Christianity. A watching world is more interested in what they see you do than what they hear you say. My life has to match my message for it to be taken seriously.

#### **Closing Discussion:**

- Share with the group a time when someone else's faith inspired you.

Have people share. Identify how their actions matched the message of faith in that person.

- Examine your own behavior, what about your life would inspire someone else to seek Jesus?

Ask if anyone would care to share. Personal reflection and sharing this together as people feel safe can lead you into a wonderful time of praying for one another.

*Close by praying for one another to live like you believe.*