



STUDY GUIDE

ENCOURAGED 06.04.2017

[set up]

Share a story of something said to you, written to you, or done for you that was very encouraging, especially if it was related to your faith in Christ.

[digging deeper]

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10.

This is a letter penned to an approximately one-year-old church planted by the Apostle Paul. Read Acts 17:1-10 to see the history of its inception. Paul had to be rushed out of Thessalonica. He was not able to make it back to check on the new believers. Based on what you have read so far, what do you think were Paul's concerns and discouragements regarding the Thessalonians? How about the concerns and discouragements that the Thessalonians were carrying?

Paul sent Timothy to check on the Thessalonians (see 1 Thess. 3:2). Timothy returned back to Corinth, where Paul then penned this letter to the Thessalonians based on what he heard from Timothy. What evidence do you see that Paul was encouraged by what he was hearing about these young Christians?

Paul also sent encouraging words back to the Thessalonians. What are some of the words you saw in chapter 1 that were given by Paul to greatly encourage the Thessalonians?

The message this week spoke to the Gospel being the most encouraging message ever. Do you agree with that? Why or why not?

How can we be encouraged by:

- The Gospel coming TO us (1 Thess. 1:5)?
- The Gospel working IN us (1 Thess. 1:3, 6-7)?
- The Gospel speaking THROUGH us (1 Thess. 1:8-10)?

What evidence did Paul identify that helped him know that the Thessalonians were truly saved?

How does joy in the face of affliction help reinforce that salvation has happened?

How do the three actions of the Gospel (listed above) help us identify if salvation has truly come to a person?

Paul said that the faith of the Thessalonians had gone out to others (v. 8). How do you suspect that happened?

How does the Gospel come out from us? On a large post it note, draw a line vertically down the middle and label one column “lips” and the other “lives.” Now brainstorm a list of how the Gospel goes out from our lips and also from our lives. Share which one is easiest for you and which one is hardest for you. What is one step that you can take to grow in your weak area (lips or life?)

[living it out]

One of the most natural ways to share the Gospel is to share our conversion story (AKA our new life story or testimony).

When is the last time you shared your story of coming to Christ?

Are you willing to share it this week with someone, and if so, who comes to mind?

Here is a link to help guide you in putting together or refreshing your story
<http://www.cvconline.org/resources/how-to-write-your-story/>

Next steps from today:

- 1- Pray about better knowing your story and more often sharing your story.
- 2- Spend some time writing down or refreshing your story.
- 3- Practice saying it out loud to yourself.
- 4- Practice sharing it with a believing friend or family member (if time allows you could even pair up and practice tonight).
- 5- Share it with someone who is not a believer (ask permission first – “Would you mind if I share with you one of the most important parts of my life?”). A person in your LifeHouse circle would be ideal, or someone from work, or someone who God has brought into your three-foot zone.

Close in Prayer. Pray for each other (and encourage each other) as you prepare to share your new life stories this week!