

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

"I choose to esteem others above myself."

Monday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to give you His insight as you study this passage.

Read I Thessalonians 2:1-12. Reread verses 1-2.

Read Acts 17:1-9. Why might some have considered the visit to Thessalonica a failure?

Why does Paul state that their ministry in Thessalonica was not a failure?

Read Acts 16:11-40 for more detail on the ministry that occurred while Paul was in Philippi. What sort of opposition were these missionaries facing?

What enables the apostles to continue ministering in the face of such great opposition?

Describe a time when you have encountered or observed opposition because of faith in God?

What convictions and practices enabled strength in the face of such opposition?

Close your time in prayer using the following topics as a guide.

- Strength and conviction for all believers to persevere in spite of opposition.
- Encouragement and strength for missionaries in countries where opposition to the gospel is constantly felt: China, Turkey, Pakistan, and India are a few.
- A kingdom perspective that measures success according to God's standards not the world's.

Tuesday

"We dared to tell you *his* gospel in spite of strong opposition." Begin by praying that God would give you courage to make *his* gospel known wherever you go today.

Read I Thessalonians 2:1-12; reread verses 3-6. What are the three adjectives Paul uses to describe the missionaries' appeal in verse 3?

It is obvious that the Thessalonian believers have been told that the missionaries' intent was to mislead them. Paul counters this by expressing that their message was fully truthful, their motives were pure, and their methods for teaching were forthright and without deceit.

On whom does Paul say he is reliant for direction and his message?

The Thessalonian believers would have been able to observe and test for themselves whether the message was true and the method was forthright, but motives are not always seen. On whom does Paul rely to test his motives?

If Paul's priority had been to please men instead of God, how might his ministry have looked different?

Spend a few moments reflecting on your own life. In what ways is your life demonstrating your priority to please God above men?

In what ways is your life demonstrating a priority to please men over God?

Close your time in prayer, asking God to test your heart and give you His perspective on your motives. Express your desire to have his approval as your only pursuit.

Wednesday

Spend a few moments in silence. On a separate piece of paper write down any concerns or distractions you may have. Ask God to help you focus on His words as you study today.

Read I Thessalonians 2:1-12. Reread verses 6-8.

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:8. How did the missionaries strive to not be burdensome?

Paul compares their gentle interaction with the Thessalonians to a mother caring for her child. How would a mother's care for her child be described?

With what attitude did the missionaries share the gospel and their lives?

To whom in your life are you a spiritual "parent"? How are you delightfully sharing the gospel of Christ and your life with this person?

Close your time in prayer. Pray for those in your life to whom you are a spiritual "parent" asking God to mature and protect this person. Ask God to give you a heart that delights in sharing His message and your life for the sake of others growth in Him. Ask God to help you continue to grow in Him, so that you can offer up a life that increasingly reflects who He is.

Thursday

Spend a few moments thinking about something God has created or given in which you take delight. Ask God to help you delight in Him as the giver of all things.

Read I Thessalonians 2:1-12; reread verses 9-10.

The missionaries worked hard while they were among the Thessalonians so that they would not be a burden. They did not want anyone to confuse their reasons for preaching the message of the gospel as a way of making money. There were no strings attached or requirements for hearing the gospel.

Read verse 10. What three adjectives does Paul give to describe their interaction with the Thessalonians?

*"The apostles called on their readers and God to bear witness to their behavior in both action and motive. Their inner convictions led to devout (holy, hosiōs) conduct. With reference to God's objective standard their behavior was **righteous**, measuring up to what God expects and requires. Their conduct was unrepachable (**blameless**; amemptōs) able to stand their critics' scrutiny because it was right."* (Taken from: The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Eds. Walvoord J. and Zuck, R. 1983.)

Ask God to search your heart and show you any character trait or behavior that would hinder someone from the truth of the Gospel. Sit in silence for a few moments and allow God to show you these areas.

Express to God your need for change and ask Him to help you grow in this area.

What traits or habits in your life demonstrate an authentic message of Christ? Celebrate these. Thank God for this work.

Ask God to help you live a life that is holy, righteous and blameless so that the gospel flows as an unhindered message through your life.

Friday

Begin your time in prayer. Use Psalm 139:23-24 as a guide.

Read I Thessalonians 2:1-12; reread verses 11-12.

Earlier in the passage the care of the apostles had been likened to the care of a mother for her child, now their interaction is likened to a father's interaction with his children. What three actions did they take as spiritual "fathers" towards the Thessalonian believers? Give a short definition of each of these words.

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_____ -
_____ -

What were they urging the Thessalonians towards?

*The appeal to lead lives **worthy of God** is the highest of all for those who have tasted God's grace in salvation. Paul heightened his exhortation by reminding his readers that they had been specially called by God, called to enter and be partakers in **His kingdom** and called to glorify and share in God's **glory**.* (Taken from: The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Eds. Walvoord J. and Zuck, R. 1983.)

Leading a life worthy of God is a high and sober calling for all believers. God has promised not to leave us alone in this pursuit, but has given us the power of the Holy Spirit and the truth of His Word to guide us.

End your time in prayer using the following ideas as a guide.

- Ask God to impress on you the importance of living a life that is worthy of God.
- Ask for protection against discouragement or distraction from this calling.
- Affirm that the Holy Spirit will work in you to transform your life for God's purposes.
- Ask God to show you your next steps in a life that is increasingly worthy of God.
- Ask God to give you perseverance in this lifelong process of transformation.