**Community Group Discussion Guide
2 Thessalonians 2:13-17**

*Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17*

*Set the Context…*

**Context**: Paul has addressed the second coming of Jesus, because the Thessalonians had been shaken and alarmed by the false teachers in the church (2 Thess. 2:1-3). In describing things that must first take place before the second coming there is a rebellion and the “man of lawlessness” is reveled. This man who is the antichrist, will deceive many to believe what is false in order that they may be condemned. Paul now encourages the Thessalonians that destruction is not their end because of God’s choosing of them. They are called and empowered by Jesus to stand firm and hold to the traditions they were originally taught.

**Commentary:**  Paul begins this passage with thanksgiving “***but we ought always to give thanks to God for you***” (v.*13*). There is a reassurance that the Thessalonian believers are not destined for wrath, but to obtain salvation (cf. *1 Thess. 5:9-10*). Paul’s gratitude comes from the truth that God chose the believers to be saved. The believers are saved, not because they earn God’s favor by works. Rather, God devoted himself to love and elect people to be saved from the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4-5) No one knows how God chooses people, nor who will be saved. (*Deut. 7:7-8; Rom 9:11-24*). Election is also not absent of the responsibility of man to make a choice to repent and believe the gospel. (Romans 10:13; John 6:37) For this reason, Paul was thankful that God’s call through the Gospel was effectual to believers in Thessalonica, because they responded to the Gospel by trusting in Jesus (*vv.13-14*). Not only is there confidence in the believer’s salvation but also their “***sanctification by the spirit”*** and believing the truth. In stark contrast to the before mentioned antichrist, believers who are called by God are continually growing to put away rebellion and reflect the glory of God in their lives until the day they actually attain that glory when Jesus returns. (v.14) Paul exhorts believers to “***stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter***” (v.*15*). The Thessalonian believers have the traditions which are a body of the truth handed down to them by Paul. They received Paul’s teachings in person and received a letter as well. The contemporary church has the privilege that the Thessalonian church and the early churches did not have. We have the word of God that is complete and available to us. God’s word is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true (*Ps 19:7-11*). Now there is no reason for believers to be confused or to be afraid about the second coming of Jesus, because we have God’s word. Paul prays for the Thessalonians that “***Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word***” (*vv.16-17*). The source of our comfort is from God the Father and the Lord Jesus. He comforts our heart through the Gospel regardless of our circumstances. He strengthens believers in every good work and word.

*Share main truths of the passage along with verses that teach them* and discuss how to apply to our daily lives …

**Key Points**:

1. Believers in Christ are not going to face the same judgment as unbelievers, because they were chosen by God to be saved (2 Thess. 2:13-14)
2. Believers are called to stand firm and hold to the word of God (2 Thess. 2:15)
3. Believers are able to find their comfort and strength in God (2 Thess. 2:16-17)

**Discussion and Application Questions:**

Verses 13-14

1. Paul’s gratitude overflows from God’s unmerited gift of salvation to believers. How can you be grateful in the present regardless of circumstances?
2. Paul was persecuted, but he is grateful. What is one thing that hinders your gratitude? What is one thing that you can change in your life to be grateful to God?
3. Think about when a non-believer is saved, what do you feel? How can we cultivate the joy like Paul when non-believers are saved?
4. Believers have the eternal hope in Christ. Are you sharing this hope with non-believers? If not, what is hindering you to share the hope with one another? How can your community group and Highview Baptist Church help you?
5. Scripture teaches that God has elected people to be saved before the beginning. What do you feel about this truth? And why?
6. What is your tendency to evangelism? How would you comprehend our responsibility to share the Gospel and God’s sovereign election?

Verses 15

1. Paul encourages believers to stand firm. What are things that make it difficult for you to stand firm in truth?
2. Paul exhorts believers through his spoken or written word. Can you think of anyone that needs hear encouragements from God’s word?
3. As we have seen in verse 15, why is the Bible so important to Christians in every area?
4. How can your community group and Highview Baptist Church help you to stand firm and hold to the God’s word?
5. Paul taught the Thessalonians with God’s word, who are you teaching the word of God to? How can you prepare yourself for this?
6. Paul was sent out to proclaim God’s word. How can you and your community group care and love for missionaries who have been sent to proclaiming God’s word to people who never heard the Gospel?

Verses 16-17

1. Paul’s prayer shows that God alone brings the true comfort to believers. When do you feel comfort/secure? What is your source of comfort?
2. What is the good hope that God gave us through His unmerited favor, grace?
3. What unsettles your heart? Why?
4. As we are strengthened in every good work and word by God, can you think of one thing that you can do to serve others? Can your community group think of one thing that your community group can do to serve others?

*Share a key take away or challenge for the week…*

*Pray together in light of 2 Thess. 2:13-17…*

**Prayer Guide:**

Pray for our church that people would be built up to worship God for his sovereign grace in our lives. pray that even in harsh circumstances we would learn to worship the Lord for his goodness to us. Pray that we would be those who own the responsibility of sharing the gospel and trusting God’s sovereign will to save those he has called.

Pray for our city that many would hear the call of God to their hearts and respond. Pray that churches and believers from all over the city would stand firm and be sanctified in the truth of God’s word.

Pray for our world that missionaries will continue rising up and going to places where the gospel is not named to teach people the word of God.