**Community Group Discussion Guide**

**2 Thessalonians 3:1-5**

*Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5*

*Set the Context…*

**Context:** Paul has been writing to the Thessalonians in attempt to warn and exhort them in their faith. He does not want them to be deceived by pseudonymous authors attempting to distort his message of “the day of the Lord” (2 Thess. 2:2). Instead, he hopes to rectify these false doctrines by disclosing that the second coming of Christ will not proceed “the apostasy”, “the man of lawlessness”, or “the son of destruction” (2:3). Paul recognizes that his audience will likely be stricken with fear as he prophetically foretells of these Satanic figures. Therefore, to not leave his audience in permanent shock he chooses to encourage them by reminding them of God’s election (2:13-14) and comfort in Christ (2:16-17). Paul does not wish for the Church to be brought to a paralyzing fear of Christ’s second coming, but he does want them to be prepared and confident in the Lord who loves them and grants them “eternal comfort.” This passage will focus on two things to bring comfort, prayer for kingdom advancement and the faithfulness of God.

**Commentary:** After giving attention to Christ’s second coming and the Thessalonian’s confidence during trials, Paul turns to himself and his companions. He needs his brothers and sisters to pray for the fruitfulness of his ministry. Hoping that just as the Thessalonians had received the word “in power and in the holy spirit” (1 Thess. 1:5), so also, will the word of the Lord be received by others (2 Thess. 3:1). Paul always invited churches to pray with him for the spread of the gospel. Prayer is the work of gospel ministry. Paul also requests that petition would be made for his deliverance from the persecution of unbelievers he was currently experiencing (3:2). This is an important verse to note, because even though Paul does not run from trials, he does not promote searching for superfluous persecution.

While Paul is asking for supplication to be made on behalf of him and his companions, he transitions back to the Thessalonians; it seems he is so selfless that he does not even designate more than two sentences to his own needs. Shifting attention to the Thessalonians, he reveals his great confidence in their ability to abide in his commands, because the “**Lord is faithful**” (3:3-4). Notice, Paul’s confidence in the Thessalonians is not due to their own zeal or strength but is rather in the Lord they serve. He will surely do it in them. (1 Thess. 5:24) The same Lord who destined the church for these trials (1 Thess. 3:3) will preserve the church through these trials. God is then sovereign in his decree of and activity in trials.

Paul concludes this section by praying for the Thessalonian’s hearts be in tune with “**the love of God**” and “**steadfastness of Christ**” (2 Thess. 3:5). As is common in his letters to Thessalonica, Paul desires for the Church to practice the Christian ethic of love for God and neighbor while remaining immovable under trials. It then seems appropriate to conclude that love and perseverance should be chief markers of any faithful church.

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

**Key Points:**

* request for prayer for the mission of the gospel. (2 Thess. 3:1-2)
* encouragement and confidence. (2 Thess. 3:3-4)
* Supplication of love and perseverance. (2 Thess. 3:5)

**Discussion/Application Questions:**

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

1. Paul asks the Thessalonians to pray for the Gospel to be spread, who are/can you be praying for to receive the Gospel?
2. Why do you think Paul saw prayer as an integral component to people hearing the gospel? How does this impact you?
3. Notice that the spread of the gospel is a primary focus for Paul, how are you prioritizing evangelism in your week to week routine?
4. Who is one person you can share the gospel with this next week?
5. Considering Paul’s words, how should Christians rely upon prayer in evangelism and discipleship?
6. What are some practical steps that you are taking or can take to pray for lost people around you?
7. Paul asks to be delivered from persecution, so how does this inform the way you think about trials?
8. Is it okay for a Christians to ask for deliverance from times of hardship and affliction? How do we balance this with God’s will in our suffering?

2 Thessalonians 3:3-4

1. Paul’s confidence in the Thessalonian’s perseverance rests in the faithfulness of the Lord, how does this shape we think about Christian faithfulness?
2. How does believing in the faithfulness of the Lord help you to abide in Christ during this season of life?
3. Paul says, “he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.” How does knowing that the Lord rules over Satan give you peace? How does it help you fight sin?
4. What has been a difficult Christian discipline to maintain during this season of life?
5. What are some practical steps you can take in this season of life to be faithful to the commands of the Lord?
6. While ultimately the Lord is the one who preserves our faithfulness, he gives us the means of community and discipleship to bring about fruition. How has discipleship and community recently helped you to be faithful to the Lord?
7. How can you practically seek to grow through discipleship and community in the next week?

2 Thessalonians 3:5

1. How does a love for God transform a Christian’s devotion to God?
2. What will potentially happen to a person who attempts to obey the commands of God without loving God and grace of the gospel?
3. What are some practical ways you can try to stir your affections for God?
4. Paul requests for our hearts to directed toward “the steadfastness of Christ”, how does Christ as the model of obedience inform your understanding of perseverance?
5. How has a love for God and an imitation of the steadfastness of Christ shaped your Christian life during the past few months?

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

*Pray together in light of 2 Thessalonians 3:1-4…*

Pray for our church that we would obey the Lord’s commands from a changed heart of love for him. Pray for our church to be emboldened to share the gospel so that it speeds ahead as it did with us. Pray that we would be strengthened as we remember the faithfulness of the Lord in our lives.

Pray for our city that our friends, family, and neighbors would be changed by the gospel. Pray that wicked men who oppose the gospel and persecute people would be humbled and repent.

Pray for our world that the gospel would speed ahead in persecuted and unreached nations. Pray that those who are weary in oppressive conditions would have their hearts directed by the Lord to love and steadfastness.