

1 Thessalonians 2 Study notes



Opening Prayer:

Loving and Gracious God,

We thank you that we are able to come together freely, in this place to discuss your Holy Word. We ask that you would open our eyes, ears and hearts to receive your message. Help us to discover ways to apply your Word in our daily lives. Grant us courage and strength to faithfully do your will and follow your teaching in our conversations and discussions that we will engage in during our time together and reaching out to others.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

Just a minute:

Each person is to take 1 minute to note something that engaged them from week 1 or did they take up the challenge of writing a letter of encouragement to someone, how was this experience.

Biblical World view (have this read by someone)

What type of world view do we have? George Barna (American Market research analyst) reports at the start of 2014 that 7% of Christians in America have a Biblical world view and 51% of ministers do as well. Defining such a worldview as believing that absolute moral truth exists, that it is based upon the Bible, and having a biblical view on six core beliefs.

- the accuracy of biblical teaching,
- the sinless nature of Jesus,
- the literal existence of Satan,
- the omnipotence and omniscience of God,
- salvation by grace alone,
- the personal responsibility to evangelise

Maybe this research challenges you or you may feel its parameters are too narrow. It is of note that not everyone sees this view as correct and that there are varying aspects of how we personally find God engages us and the world.

Read (have this read by someone)

1 Thessalonians 2

Take 10

Discuss the sermon and the reading. What was new or a challenge? Discuss some of the ways Christians or the church may have tried to sell the Gospel rather than be its steward.

Take 2 mins

In quiet reflection think about people who opened yours eyes to different truths in the Gospel.

Now Share

How you feel reflecting on these people and how has their encouragement shaped you. How do you encourage others?

Read

Acts 20:24 and Romans 10:14-15

How does this differ from how we as the church may be acting today.

Society and Culture

Vs 3 and 4: Think about the phrase “pure love is without conditions”. Do we put conditions for how we as a church love or engage the world depending on a response sought or given?

Church Culture

What practices or beliefs take place in the life of the church which could well be seen as being made up by humans, e.g. lighting a Christ candle? And do these things have a place in worship?

Extension:

Looking at the 6 core beliefs, rate them in order of the easiest one to accept to the hardest and compare and discuss in the group.

How do denominational parameters interplay with these 6 beliefs? Would some denominations change the order for which were more highly accepted or rejected?

Rank these in order of what you feel the church teaches / preaches on from the most prominent to the least. Any surprises?

Encouragement

God sees you with his eyes and knowledge of your potential. He has a purpose and a plan for each one of us and sometimes we can only see the problems of the past and not the hope of tomorrow.

Engage

How do you think the church then would have responded when they read this letter where Paul places forward his claim that he came with integrity in his preaching and living, not a snake oil salesman?

If, when you hear a sermon or teaching about God it engages you, is it the Holy Spirit or just good words and phrases that have engaged you? How do you discern the difference?

For the week ahead

Challenge: investigate a non-christian sect or other religion and find 3-5 things that define them as not being Christian.

Read: 1 Thessalonians 3

Prayer

Gracious and Merciful God,

We thank you for this precious time of growth and renewal, while we were gathered here in your name. We give you thanks and praise for the opportunity to meet and look at Thessalonians together. We bring before you all of the groups that are meeting, may they be filled with excitement as they discover and engage what it means to be stewards of your Gospel. Grant all your peace and strength at this time.

You remind us in 2 Timothy 1:7 that you did not give us a spirit of fear and timidity, but a spirit of power and self-discipline to extend to ourselves and those we care about and meet in our daily lives.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Amen