



GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Spring Quarter - Lesson 9 - Week of May 29, 2022

Lesson: STANDING STRONG DURING TOUGH TIMES

Bible Verses: II Thessalonians 1:1-12; Acts 17:1-9; Matthew 5:10-12; James 1:2-4; I Peter 5:10

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- It's a Friday night after a terribly busy week; how do you spend it?
- What is your favorite beach to visit?

INTRODUCTION

God never evaluates a church based on external features. He is not impressed with innovative, clever repackaging of the gospel to make it more palatable for unbelievers. God does not evaluate us based on how happy and comfortable we are during tough times, but He certainly is concerned to see how strong we remain. God wants to know that He is being served and glorified at all times. Be strong in the Lord!

1. Are you God centered at all times?
2. Whether we are suffering or enjoying a problem-free existence, the ultimate goal is to bring God glory and honor. How can you honor God today?

DISCUSSION

Read II Thessalonians 1:1-12.

Key Words In The Text (II Thess. 1:8):

- In flaming fire - literally, fire is a symbol of judgment (Ex. 3:2; 19:16-20).
- Taking vengeance – these words mean to give full punishment.

Drawing Near:

Paul was pleased with the faith of the Thessalonians and praised them for it. If you were telling a friend about your church, what qualities or features would you brag about? In other words, what are the praiseworthy strengths of your church?

Paul and his companions founded the local congregation at Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9). Their success in evangelizing the city enraged the unbelieving Jews, and the ensuing uproar forced the missionary team to leave. After stops in Berea and Athens, Paul eventually made his way to Corinth, from which he wrote the first letter. A few months later, prompted by a

further report of the dire situation in Thessalonica, Paul penned this letter (II Thessalonians) to the Thessalonica church.

First, the report must have indicated that the persecution the Thessalonians were undergoing had intensified, prompting Paul to exhort them to endurance. Second, despite Paul's teaching, he learned that the Thessalonians were still confused about the return of Christ and the day of the Lord.

Finally, there was information in the report that some (who believed Jesus would return very soon) had stopped working and were sponging off the rest of the congregation. Although those issues were serious, they did not keep Paul from being immensely thankful for the strong spiritual character of the church.

1. Summarize the mindset of the Thessalonians. Look at how they are described.
2. How does your spiritual life compare to their example?

During your storm, it is important to stay strong in the Lord and your faith. Many Christians focus on personal comfort and happiness rather than on the glory of the Lord. Therefore, when trials come, they moan incessantly about suffering. Read Matthew 5:10-12. What do these verses reveal about how God uses suffering for good in the lives of His people?

Life can blindsides us with many difficulties - often all at the same time. And it can feel like you will never get out of the storm. But by learning how to work with your pain and keep your mind strong, you can secure a better chance to grow through your storm.

PRAYER FOCUS: God, empower me to be strong in the Lord during the trials of life.