

## Ice Breaker:

What three qualities make a good mom?

## <sup>1</sup>Groups Discussion Questions:

### Read 1 Thessalonians 2:3-16

*3 For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. 4 On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. 5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. 6 We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. 7 Instead, we were like young children among you.*

What slanderous attack does Paul refute in verses 3 and 5? How are flattery and greed often motives for false prophets? (3, 5)

How is Paul a faithful steward of the gospel according to verse 4? How does seeing yourself as a steward of God's words and God's people help free us from concern about human opinion? (4)

What is the difference between flattery and encouragement? Why is flattery such a poisonous tool for evangelists and pastors to use? (5)

Why does Paul stress so vigorously how little he sought praise from men? How would being overly concerned about human praise cause someone to change his message? (6)

### Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

#### *Final Instructions*

*12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.*

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<sup>1</sup> Questions this week taken from

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*16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

What do these verses teach about the elements of a healthy church life?

What do these verses teach about genuine Christian fellowship and accountability?

How would consistent obedience to verses 16-18 improve your Christian life?  
How would it improve your witness to a lost world?

Why is it vital for Christians to be forgiving and to refuse to be bitter or seek revenge, especially toward other Christians? (15)

How would you define kindness (doing good) toward one another? To whom does Paul command it here? (15)

What is it vital for the Christian life to be characterized by joy? Why should a strong theme of joy be evident in corporate worship? Why do so many Christian services seem so joyless? (16)

Paul commands the Thessalonian church to "pray without ceasing." How could this be a part of an individual Christian's daily life? How could it be a part of the corporate life of a healthy church? (17)

How would consistent obedience to verse 18 improve a Christian's personal life?  
How would it enrich corporate worship? (18)

## **Prayer Requests**

## **Digging Deeper:**

What is Idleness?

## **Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15**

*6 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching<sup>[a]</sup> you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the*

*contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."*

*11 We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. 13 And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.*

*14 Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instructions in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. 15 Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer.*

1. What issue does Paul address in verses 6-15? Why is idleness such a problem in the life of the church? (6-15)
2. Paul addresses the problem of idleness in six steps. What does he first tell the Thessalonians generally about themselves in verses 4-5? How could that relate to the idleness issue of verses 6-15? (4-5)
3. What does Paul command the non-idle Thessalonian Christians to do in reference to those who are idle? How is this a powerful form of church discipline? (6)
4. How does Paul present his own example as a role model for them to follow? See also 1 Thessalonians 2:9. How is the power of example vital when it comes to an issue like this? (7-9)
5. How does Paul refer to the principle he laid down for them? What is that rule? How is obedience to Paul's teaching a strong remedy to idleness? (10)
6. How does Paul directly command the idlers among them? What does he command them to do? (11-13)
7. What does Paul command in reference to those who may stubbornly disobey his instructions here? What is Paul's goal in this command? (14-15)