

## Growing Disciples

### Father's Day 2021

**Transition:** We are taking a one-week break from our study in Revelation in order to honor fathers and men. This is a fitting thing to do, of course, especially considering how important fathers and men are in the storyline of the Bible (besides our own lives!). We are using a passage that is not exclusively for fathers, however. In fact, it is a passage that is about discipling others. In some ways, discipling someone else is similar to doing what fathers tend to do, which is why this passage is both appropriate and useful for any disciple or discipler, male or female.

**Context:** This week's passage comes from Paul's first letter to the church at Thessalonica. Paul had planted this church during his second missionary journey. After leaving Philippi, he eventually arrived at Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9). Luke then states that Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue for three Sabbaths. Some who heard his message believed and became followers of Jesus, but others became irate and sought to harm Paul and his traveling partner, Silas. In order to protect them, the ones who had trusted in Jesus sent Paul and Silas on to a nearby town (Berea). Paul then made his way to Corinth (via Athens). While he was in Corinth (circa AD 51), a messenger (Timothy) from Thessalonica arrived with news of the church as well as a variety questions. Both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians were written during this same time period.

#### Opening Questions:

- What do you admire about your father? If you cannot think of anything (or didn't have a father involved in your life), think of another man whom you admired growing up. In what ways did he influence you?
- What is something that you have worked hard for? What made you decide to work so hard? For you, what does working hard look like practically speaking? Was your hard work worth the effort? Why or why not?

#### Scripture/Storying: 1Thessalonians 2:9-12

#### Discipleship Questions:

- What did Paul say about why he and Silas worked so hard? What are the advantages of their strategy? What are the disadvantages?
- How important is it to you to have someone in your life whose walk with the Lord is mature so that it makes you want to emulate him/her? Share an example of how someone else's walk with Jesus has helped you to grow in the Lord.
- What kind of character qualities do you admire in leaders? Compare the character qualities you admire with what Paul lists in v10. How do the two lists compare? What effect do the ones that Paul lists have on you as a follower?
- When Paul said that his conduct was holy, what does that mean and what might that look like in real life? Is holy a word that you would use to describe your typical daily conduct? What are some ways that we could live in a holy way today?
- In your life, who stands out for having been especially encouraging to you? In what ways did he/she encourage you? How did his/her encouragement help you? Choose someone whom you will encourage this week. What will you say to him/her?
- Is there a difference between encouragement and exhortation? If so, what is the difference? How are they similar? Paul then adds that after exhorting and encouraging them, they "charged" them with the command to "walk in a manner worthy of God." What does Paul mean by "charge" and how does it fit with encouragement and exhortation?
- Paul ties walking "in a manner worthy of God" with God's calling us "into his own kingdom and glory." Why does Paul do this? How does this inform our understanding and practice of what it means to exhort, encourage, and/or charge a fellow brother or sister in Christ?