

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"CLARIFICATION ON HOW TO RESPOND" | 2 THESSALONIANS 3 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What is an awkward or funny response to what someone said or did that you can think of?

"REQUESTS" (2 Thess 3: 1-2)

Paul asks for prayer for himself, the spread of the gospel with speed and honor, and for deliverance from evil. **Why is it difficult for some to pray for missionaries? What are ways to make prayer for missionaries a regular habit?**

"REASSURANCES" (2 Thess 3: 3-5)

Paul reassures the people that God is faithful to protect them from evil and to strengthen them to do His will through His love and Jesus' example of patient endurance. **What does this show about God? What does that mean for His followers?**

"REPRIMANDS" (2 Thess 3: 6-15)

Paul tells the people to warn, with love, 3 types of people in the church: the lazy, the gossips, and the disobedient. **Which type is difficult to identify and warn? Which of these sins do you struggle with most?**

"REMARKS" (2 Thess 3: 16-18)

Paul ends his letter praying that the people will experience God's peace and grace. **What was it like the last time you experienced God's peace and/or grace?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

God used Paul's letter to correct believers' ideas about the 2nd Coming and to give clarity on how believers should live so that they live more fully in God's grace and peace, sharing the gospel with others. **How well do you receive warnings and corrections? Have you been struggling to believe that God can strengthen you? Pray that God will give you strength through His peace and grace.**

2 Thessalonians 3

10-1-23

Clarification on How To Respond

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those **online and** in the **additional seating** area.
- B. **Slide1** Today is the *Global Day of Prayer for the Rohingya*. This year the focus is on the theme *“beauty for ashes”*. While on the surface the plight of the Rohingya seems **hopeless**, **God loves them and has not forgotten** them. You can go on our App/open, **or website** **Events** page (**Mission’s** page) to **download the prayer guide** for more information for *how we can be praying for the Rohingya*.
- C. **Slide2** **Sunday Night of Prayer**: Join us TONIGHT from 6:30p-7:30pm in the Agape Room as we pray for our community around us and for each other.
- D. **Prayer**: **Father, we are not the answer, Your Son Jesus is. We believe that, we own that, we humbly submit to that.** As we read the *Precious Words* of 2 Thes, allow them to **rekindle our hope** and **fan into flame our desire** to **live** in *God-honoring, hard-working ways*.

II. Slide3a Intro: Clarification on How To Respond

- A. **Paul’s emphasis** in his 2nd letter to the church at Thessalonica, was about: **Commendation** in ch.1, **Correction** in ch.2, **and now Clarification** in ch.3.
 1. Paul is going to **clarify how they should respond** to **believers** in the church who are becoming *flaky, unreliable, and lazy*.
- B. R.A.Torry said, *One of the great paradoxes of the Christian faith is that God wants us to talk to Him about everything that is going on in our lives, even though He already knows everything. So why pray?* He gave these reasons for prayer:
 1. **Because** there is a devil, and prayer is a God-appointed way to resist Him. **Because** prayer is God’s way for us to obtain what we need from Him. **Because** prayer is the means God has appointed for us to find *“grace to help in time of need”*. **Because** prayer with thanksgiving is God’s way for us to obtain freedom from anxiety and to receive *“the peace of*

God". Because we are commanded plainly in 1Thes.5:17 *Pray without ceasing*, and realize, that *God wants us to talk with Him*.

a) Yes, He is all-knowing, but He also desires our fellowship. When we seek God's face in prayer, we strengthen our relationship with Him. That's the most important reason to pray!

C. Slide3b Outline: *Requests. Reassurances. Reprimands. Remarks.*

III. Slide4a REQUESTS (1,2) READ 2 prayers

A. Slide4b PRAY FOR GOD'S MESSAGE (1)

B. Paul had just prayed for them (end ch.2), now will you guys pray for me?

C. Have you ever prayed for the Word of God itself? [word = gospel message]

1. Speed ahead - to run/progress. It was used as *a warrior running in battle*.

a) The picture is *the Word* running, as the authorized messenger of the Lord, and then *further applied* to us and the urgency we should have in *running swiftly* with it.

b) Slide4c Paul told Timothy, 2 Tim 2:9 *I am suffering* (for the gospel), *bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound!* (it's running!) - **Pray the word would outrun all its opponents.*

2. Wait, doesn't *the Word* have it's own power? Yes, but we are to listen to the text and do what it says. *"Prayer puts wheels under God's word."* *"It gives it wings to fly."*

D. Be honored - God brings its success. [Is.55:11 *It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it*]

E. Slide4d PRAY FOR GOD'S MESSENGER (2) *1st the offense now the defense.* (good dating vs)

F. *And that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith.*

G. Pray for the gospels success *from those* who would oppose it.

H. At what pace is the Word moving in your life? [snail, turtle, rabbit, cheetah?]

IV. Slide5a REASSURANCES (3-5) READ

A. Slide5b CONCERNING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS (3,4)

B. He moves immediately from *faithless men*, to the Faithful God.

1. *Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.* Deut.7:9
2. He never forgets, never fails, never falters, never forfeits His word. AWPink
3. Slide5c *Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.* Ps.36:5

C. God's **faithfulness** to us (3) is the basis for *our faithfulness to Him.* (4)

1. God is faithful to do what? Faithful to **establish**/strengthen *you* and **guard**/keep watch over *you* from the evil one/satan.
 - a) There are 2 extremes when it comes to **spiritual warfare**: those that are *preoccupied with* everything satanic, and those people that say, *uhh I don't believe in it.*

D. So, your heart needs to be directed in 2 directions: love and steadfastness.

E. Slide5d CONCERNING GOD'S LOVE (5a)

F. To the love of God – what a beautiful prayer, **May the Lord direct** (making something straightforward and simple, as having no deviations) *our hearts to the love of God ... I need that direction!* [join us at 6:30 as we'll use some of these prayers]

G. Slide5e CONCERNING GOD'S STEADFASTNESS (5b)

H. To the steadfastness of Christ – Prov.23:19 *Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way.* (Prv we're told to do it; and here, pray the Lord to help!)

1. It's the *patient endurance* displayed by Christ *in His own suffering.* His example helps believers endure persecution.

V. Slide6a REPRIMANDS (6-15) READ

A. Slide6b THREE RECIPIENTS (6-14)

1. **The Lazy** (6-11) - (idleness, out of rank, out of order) defined later in vs.11 **Not busy at work ... earn their own living/bread** (12).
 - a) The Rabbis saw work so important they said, *“Together w/the knowledge of Torah, acquire a trade.”* (Kohelet Rabbah 9:7)
 - b) **Slide6c** (7) **Do as we do** - Chuck Swindoll said, *“Show me a lazy, irritating Christian on the job, and I will show you an office, store, customer, or shop, that isn’t interested in their message.”*
 - c) The sin of the Thessalonians was *sitting at home with a remote in one hand, and a Twinkie the other.*
 - (1) Some today some struggle with **having any work ethic**, and others struggle with **working too much** (or w/o making *any Sabbath* in their life).
 - (2) **Those who cannot work must be cared for; those who will not work must be disciplined.** [be a blessing, not a burden]
 - (3) **Work is a divine vocation.** As a laborer (Ruth) **or in authority** (Boaz).
 - d) *There was also a problem in Roman culture called Patronage.* You'd have **poor people** living in cities that would become **clients** or **personal assistants** to wealthy people, and they would live off their *occasional generosity*. **But** there were lots of strings attached. **This sometimes involved the clients in their patrons morally corrupt ways of life**, not to mention it was unpredictable income.
2. **The Gossipers** (11) - **some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.** (play on words, both in Eng. & Gk.)
3. **The Disobedient** (14) - those who don't **obey** Paul's word/God's word.

B. **Slide6d** **THREE RULES** (12-15)

1. **Step 1 - Identify Them** (14) - **take note of that person.**
2. **Step 2 - Admonish Them** (12,15) - **warn them.**
3. **Step 3 - Love Them** (15) - **Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.**

a) **Steps:** 1 Thes.5:14 they were already **admonished**/warned of this (don't leave them in the dark about what's going on, why won't anyone talk to me). **Then** told to **keep away from** them (6). **Then** told to **take note of that person, and have nothing to do with them** (14a) result? **shame** (14a). But **don't go to far vs.15 explains**, **Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn/admonish him as a brother.** [admonish, *for the sake of love*. Don't hang out, *for the sake of love*. Have nothing to do with them, *for the sake of love*]

C. **We live in a culture where everyone thinks it's wrong to bring about shame.**

1. **Now**, there's a big difference between *shaming someone* (for what they ought not to be shamed for, *i.e.* birthmark). **But** if someone is **choosing a perpetual behavior** that is contrary to Scripture, and you've **admonished** them, **they ought to feel shame.**

2. Don't miss this last part, **shame** has the goal of **Reconciliation!** **Shame** is not **the end** in itself.

a) **Do you** tend to *show up in people's life* as the **police** or a **paramedic**? [need both!]

b) Do you ask yourself, when do I **get to** do this, or when do I **have to** do this?

VI. Slide7a **REMARKS (16-18) READ**

A. **Slide7b THEY'LL EXPERIENCE GOD'S PEACE** (16) *wow what a verse*

B. Jesus offered *this same peace* to His disciples in Jn.14:27 **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.**

C. Think of this peace as an *in-the-midst-of* peace. *In-the-midst-of* sickness, financial problems, stress, relational struggles, etc.

1. John White (bishop of Winchester) explains it like a **lighthouse** in a **storm**:
"Winds shriek, waves crash, lightning flickers around it. But inside, the children play while their parents go about their work. They may look out the window to marvel at the powers that rage around them, but they have peace – the peace of knowing that the strength which protects them is stronger than the strength of the storm."

D. Slide 7c THEY'LL EXPERIENCE GOD'S GRACE (18)

E. Oh, *The scandal of God's Grace*. The **law** detects sin, **grace alone** conquers it.

1. *When the mask of self-righteousness has been torn from us & we stand stripped of all our accustomed defenses, we are candidates for God's generous grace.* Erwin Lutzer

F. Keywords: grace, peace, faithfulness, prayer.