

“We give thanks to God always for all of you . . .”

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Introduction: Today we begin a new study on the book of 1 Thessalonians. Thessalonica was a Macedonian port city visited by Paul and his missionary companions on his second missionary journey (see Acts 17). The city was a thriving trade center of some 200,000 people. We are told in Acts 17 that Paul’s preaching of the Gospel brought intense persecution and that he was forced to flee the city. It is not hard to imagine the concern that Paul might have for this fledgling church that he was forced to leave. Would they stand strong in the face of persecution? Would they continue to grow? Would they resent that Paul left them? Apparently, at some point Paul sent Timothy back to visit the Thessalonians. This letter then is Paul’s response to the good report that he received from Timothy of the Thessalonians’ faith and well-being. It is a letter of affection and encouragement as well as instruction in some areas of the Christian life.

Opening Discussion: In your early journey as a Christian, who was one Christian whose life you sought to imitate?

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

1. How would you describe the tone of this chapter?
2. What things did Paul see in the Thessalonian church for which he gave thanks?
3. What had been the Thessalonians’ response to the Gospel?
4. What other observations can you make about the Thessalonian church?
5. How had the Thessalonians’ lives been a model for others?

Steve said:

As I studied this chapter this week, I was struck by the fact that I am thankful for the same things in you, the good people of Faith E-Free, for which Paul was thankful in the Thessalonians. Our circumstances are different, but the gospel is bearing the same fruit among you that it bore among the Thessalonians. Just as Paul wanted the Thessalonians to understand and really “hear” why he was so thankful for **them**, I too want you to understand and “hear” why I am so thankful for **you**. The past several weeks we’ve been looking to the future to what we believe God wants us to pursue; but 1 Thessalonians makes clear that it’s also good to look at the past and see what God has already done.

6. How have you seen example of “work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope” in the lives of others in this group or in other members of Faith EFC?
7. In 1:6-7 Paul writes of his thankfulness for their joyful perseverance. How have you seen joyful perseverance in the lives of others in this group or in other members of Faith EFC?
8. In 1:8-10 Paul writes of his thankfulness for the Thessalonians’ reputation and influence. What kind of reputation and influence did they have?
9. What are your observations on the kind of reputation and influence Faith EFC has been having?