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How to Survive and Thrive in Difficult Days

I Thessalonians 1:1-7

The Thessalonian Christians are 1st century role models for us living in the 21st Century. The apostle Paul says they are examples to us. They are mentors. We all need a mentor, and we all need to build our lives spiritually so that we can become a mentor to others.

“College students and young adults are looking for mentors.” **Chip Ingram**

Godly role models possess qualities that we would all like to have. They also influence us to become better people.

Facts about the Church at Thessalonica...

- Capital of Macedonia in Northern Greece – Population 200,000.
- The church was largely made up of Gentiles.
- Paul spent several months here.

What does a Model Church look like?

**When I say the church,
I really mean the _____ in the church.**

For instance...

If you say, “That church is a friendly and warm church.”

That means the people in that church are friendly and warm.

But if you say, “That church is a cold dead church.”

That means the people in that church are spiritually cold and don’t care about reaching others.

What We Need to Thrive in Difficult Days?

1. We Need to Be _____

The Thessalonian Church was a Saved Church, v. 1-5.

Of the 350,000 churches in America, more than half of those churches may be filled with people who are not even saved. They have a religion, but not a relationship.

In a recent survey of the unchurched, “_____ % of Americans said they were open to being invited to church by a friend or relative.”

We live in days of great opportunities to reach people.

A. Saved people are in _____, v. 1

Not only are we saved, but we are safe. We are in God the Father, v. 1, in the Lord Jesus Christ, v. 1, and in the Holy Ghost, v. 5.

If you are saved, then you have a living relationship with the living God!

B. Saved people have grace and _____, v. 1b

Grace – God’s undeserved favor is given to us. God forgives our sins and gives us eternal life.

Peace – the result of His amazing gift of love.

- 1) Peace with God, Romans 5:1 – God saving your soul.
- 2) Peace of God, Philippians 4:7 – God calming your soul.

Do you experience the peace of God? A calm in your soul?

C. Saved people _____ with faith, love, and hope, v. 2-3

“Faith without works is dead.”

James 2:26

God is going to reward your service for Christ!

D. Saved people were _____ by God, v. 4

Divine election is based on God’s foreknowledge:

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.”

1 Peter 1:2

God sees the past, present, and future all at once. God created people, not puppets, not robots. We are made in the image of God, and part of that image is a free will He has given to us to choose. Our free will does not contradict His Sovereignty, nor does His Sovereignty contradict our free will.

2. We Need to be _____, v. 6

A. They became _____ of Paul, v. 6a

"Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ."

I Corinthians 11:1

The word follower is the word that we get our word "mimic" or imitator. Paul says, "I have tried to be a role model for you. I have tried to be a good mentor to you."

Being like Christ does not diminish your individuality or your personality, it enhances it. The more you are like Christ, the more winsome and beautiful you become.

B. They became followers of _____ v. 6b

"Remember my son, it is not great ideas that God blesses, it is not great talent that He honors, it is great likeness to Jesus Christ."

Charles Spurgeon

Jesus is our example of a surrendered life.

What does a surrendered life look like?

Two qualities: 1. Obedience 2. _____

Sometimes when we pray, God changes our circumstances.

Sometimes when we pray, God changes us – our attitude in our circumstances.

Are you born again? If you died today, do you know for certain if you'd go to heaven? If not, today you can ask God for His free gift of eternal life, and you can become a true child of God. You can KNOW for certain that heaven is your home.

"Verily, Verily [Truly], I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life."

John 6:47

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

I John 5:13

3. We Need to Patiently Endure _____, v.6b

If you live for God, you will be opposed. Don't be surprised. And don't be discouraged.

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

Hebrews 5:8

If the perfect Son of God in His humanity could learn greater obedience through suffering, then maybe you and I could learn a lesson or two when we go through suffering.

How suffering can help you become a better person:

A. Ask God for _____ to learn His lessons in suffering

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

James 1:5

B. Draw _____ to the Lord

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect [mature], stablish, strengthen, settle you."

1 Peter 5:10

C. Use your experience of suffering to _____

Don't waste your seasons of suffering. Turn it around and help others.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Who can you mentor? Who can you influence for good and for God? Start at home, but don't end there. Look beyond the four walls of your house and start praying and _____ others. TODAY!