

Growing together: Take some time to plan a party or social event for your Small Group this summer.

Reaching Out: Did anyone seize an opportunity to love someone who is not a Christian through works or words in the past week?

Share what happened?

Reaching Up: As you prepare your hearts and minds to interact with the Bible, take a moment to pray that God would:

- open your eyes and ears to God speaking to you through His Word
- make you teachable, that you might be a doer of the Word
- increase your love for God and others

As the Apostle Paul begins to close his second letter to the Thessalonian church he urges them to pursue faithfulness by remembering to pray, that God is their protector, and to persevere in all circumstances.

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5 together and discuss the questions that follow, as you consider how Paul's exhortation to the Thessalonians applies to you today.

1. Prayer

What does your prayer time look like throughout the week? Is it scheduled or spontaneous? Do you pray with a plan, or are you more likely to "wing it"?

What are the things you pray for most frequently in your personal prayer time? What does your Small Group spend the most time praying together about?

Do you agree with the statement, "What you pray earnestly about reflects what you care most about." Why or why not?

Are there shortcomings in your prayer life as an individual or as a Small Group? If so, what do you think might be beneficial to add or change?

The Apostle Paul urges the Thessalonian church to pray for the gospel to advance in and through them? Is this something you pray for regularly?

What do you think might happen if you begin praying about the gospel spreading through your Small Group more frequently?

2. Protection

What do verses 1-5 say about God's character? How do those characteristics of God make you feel?

Pastor Matt said in the sermon, "The protection of God should comfort us, but it should also motivate us to live boldly." What kind of boldness does this passage compel Christ followers too? How might God's protection cause you to live more boldly? Give specific answers for yourself personally, as well as for your Small Group who is sharing life together.

3. Perseverance

Our perseverance flows from God's perseverance for us. Because Christ persevered to the cross, we can persevere with the same power that led Him to obedience and to conquer death!

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in perseverance?

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." — Romans 8:37-39