

NOTES FOR INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY IN THE BOOK OF I THESSALONIANS - CHAPTER TWO

In the first chapter the theme is 'the Miracle of Ministry' - the consequence of the preaching of the gospel and the response it can bring in the life of the hearer - the work of faith, the labour of love and the steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second chapter investigates the character of a faithful ministry. It is described in terms of 10 Ms.

2:2 - Mistreatment - suffering and much opposition - there will be a reaction!

2:14 - they endured the same suffering at hands of their own people

2:15 - they killed Jesus and the prophets and drove us out

2:16 - hindering speaking that they might be saved - but God will judge

2:18 - Satan hindered

2:2 - Manner - boldness IN our God, not in ourselves,

2:10 - behaved devoutly, uprightly and blamelessly

2:3 - Method - exhortation, not from error, impurity or deceit - we can urge people on for our own ends and by dishonest means.

2:5 - never came with flattering speech,

2:9 - proclaimed

2:11 - exhorting, and encouraging and imploring - like a father with his own children

2:13 - constantly thanking God

2:4 - Mission - approved by God, entrusted with the gospel, not as pleasing men but God

2:6 - apostles of Christ

2:12 - they would walk in a manner worthy of God, His own kingdom and glory

2:19 - hope, joy, crown of exultation, glory, joy at the coming of the Lord Jesus

2:4 - Mentor - He, and no-one else, examines our hearts

2:6 - Motivation - not glory from men, his readers or others

2:8 - fond affection, well pleased to impart, even our own lives, very dear

2:17 - eager with great desire to see them, wanted to come

2:6 - Mana (a Maori word meaning 'authority') - could have asserted authority as apostles

2:7 - Mother - gentle as in nursing, tenderly caring for her own children

2:8 - Message - the gospel of God

2:9 - the gospel of God

2:13 - the word not of men but of God which performs its work in you

2:5 - Money - nor with a pretext for greed

2:9 - working night and day, so as not to be a burden to any of you

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER THREE

In this next chapter, Paul deepens his discussion of principles of ministry to explore the qualities which really come from Christ in the heart. Again they can be easily remembered by the first letter. There are 5 E's and 3 L's.

3:1,5 Q.1 Normally endurance characterised Paul. What finally persuaded him not to wait in uncertainty any longer? Why is it sometimes not good just to sit and do nothing when others may be struggling?

3:2,8,13 Q.2 The words 'strengthen'(v.2) and 'stand firm'(v.8) are the same Greek word as 'establish'(v.13) Why is this so important particularly in difficult times? How can we help others to be established in their faith?

3:2,7 Q.3 'Encourage'(v.2) is the same Greek word as 'comfort'(v.7). Literally it means 'to draw alongside to strengthen.' What kinds of situation made this so important for these Christians. How can we do the same for those around us?

3:9 Q.4 Why did Paul rejoice because of the Thessalonian Christians? What is the difference between joy and happiness? Can we still rejoice when those we know fail?

3:10 Q.5 'Most earnestly' is a superlative of the same Greek work translated 'abound' in v.12? What is the difference between ordinary prayer and most earnest prayer? For what was Paul praying? How could anything be lacking in their faith in view of his description of them in 1:3?

3:6 Q.6 How had God brought about such a strong mutual bond between Paul and his friends in Thessalonica? How can He do the same among us?

3:8 Q.7 The word 'live' used in this verse is the Greek word 'zao' which means spiritual life as compared with 'bios', physical life and 'psuche', soul life. How does the growing maturity of other Christians cause us to 'live' in this sense?

3:6,12 Q.8 'Love' in these two verses is 'agapao' which means loving the way God does. What do these two verses tell us about the source and range of such love and how it grows even greater?