



Teaching Guide
AND Essentials

- **FOR ADULTS** -



GROUP MEMBERS USE *THE BRINK*, *FUSION FAMILY*, OR *FUSION NEXT*
DEVOTIONAL STUDY GUIDES



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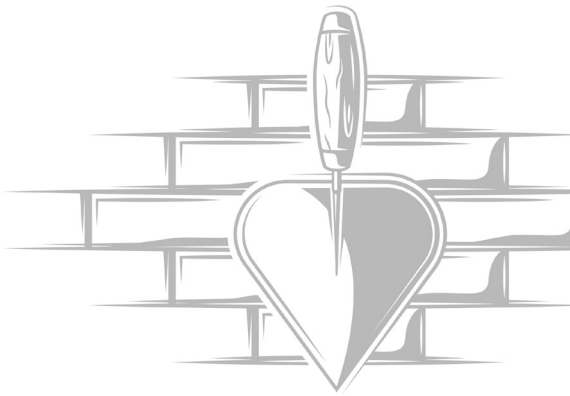


FAMILY THEME

The Church Expands

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners live out and share the gospel with unwavering commitment, a pure heart, and a consistent witness.

STUDY TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-20



CHECKLIST

- Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 6-1 or AH 6-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- Review *PowerPoint 6* and insert your own questions if needed.
- Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 6-2), the *What's Your Motivation?* Handout (AH 6-3), and the *Parent Page* (PP-6) if necessary.
- Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-6) to those who will benefit from it.

Key Truths

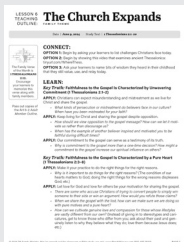
- Faithfulness to the Gospel Is Characterized by Unwavering Commitment (1 Thessalonians 2:1-2)
- Faithfulness to the Gospel Is Characterized by a Pure Heart (1 Thessalonians 2:3-8)
- Faithfulness to the Gospel Is Characterized by a Consistent Witness (1 Thessalonians 2:9-20)

Verse of the
Month

1 THESSALONIANS
2:12

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.



AH 6-1



AH 6-2

TEACHING TIP

Take some creative risks!
Even your mistakes can
leave positive impressions
on your learners.

OPTION 1: Begin by asking your learners to list challenges Christians face today. We might be tempted to think that things are worse today than they've ever been or that the challenges we face are unlike any that others have faced before. The truth is the struggles Christians face today are often very similar to those faced in the past. Transition to the lesson by saying: *Today we will consider challenges the disciples faced as they spread the gospel and the timeless essential principles that should guide our efforts for the kingdom of God today.*

OPTION 2: Begin by showing this video that examines ancient Thessalonica: tinyurl.com/WhereThess. Getting a visual of these ancient cities helps give us historical context for the Scripture we read. Transition to the lesson by saying: *Today we will examine a letter that Paul wrote to the Thessalonians and see what it means to be faithful to the gospel.*

OPTION 3: Begin by asking your learners to name bits of wisdom they remember hearing in their childhood that they find themselves still valuing, using, and relaying today. After some are mentioned, say: *Some principles are timeless. That certainly applies to efforts to faithfully spread the gospel. Today we will examine the principles that guided the efforts of the early disciples and the way we can value and employ them today.*


LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 6-2).

The principles and characteristics of the disciples to share the gospel and expand the Church in its early days are the same ones that ought to define and guide our efforts today. We can observe those principles and characteristics in Paul and Silas' ministry in Thessalonica. Paul had traveled to Thessalonica during his second missionary journey. There was a significant Jewish presence there, enough to warrant the establishment of a synagogue ([Acts 17:1](#)). At the time of his visit, Thessalonica was located on a major trade route known as the *Via Egnatia*. Situated in a natural harbor, it also served as a significant seaport. These geographic advantages led to a thriving economy. As the practical capital of Macedonia, the governor of the province lived there. All

this combined for a multicultural hub, with a significant pagan-worshipping presence alongside the substantial Jewish population.

The first of Paul's letters to the Thessalonian believers was among the earliest of his inspired writings. It was written in Corinth about AD 51. According to Luke's account as recorded in Acts 17, Paul had preached in Thessalonica for three weeks (Acts 17:2). Though some of the Jews believed, along with some Greek converts to Judaism and *leading women* of the city (Acts 17:4), great opposition arose among the Jews (Acts 17:5). Under threat of violence, Paul and Silas were forced to flee the city at night into Berea (about 50 miles from Thessalonica, Acts 17:10). Silas and Timothy were able to stay in Berea for a time, but unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica, upon learning that Paul was preaching the gospel in Berea, made the journey and began *agitating and stirring up the crowds* (Acts 17:13), forcing Paul to flee (Acts 17:14). Eventually, Silas and Timothy rejoined Paul in Corinth and updated him on the status of the Thessalonian believers. After praising the Thessalonians' faith and example, Paul recounted his and Silas' ministry efforts among them to remind them of the example they had been provided. These efforts of the apostle Paul and his fellow disciples serve as a model for faithful gospel ministry from which we can glean valuable lessons that ought to guide our gospel efforts today.

 **KEY TRUTH: Faithfulness to the Gospel Is Characterized by Unwavering Commitment**
(1 Thessalonians 2:1-2)

Paul and Silas had already been severely persecuted in Philippi before arriving in Thessalonica (**1 Thessalonians 2:2**). After casting out a spirit of divination from a slave girl, and thereby removing her owners' opportunity to make money from her fortune-telling abilities (Acts 16:16-18), Paul and Silas were seized, dragged before the magistrate, physically attacked by a crowd, stripped, beaten with rods, thrown in prison, and had their feet shackled in stocks (Acts 16:19-24).

DISCUSS:

- *What kinds of persecution or mistreatment do believers face in our culture? When have you been mistreated for your faith?*

Despite their previous extreme difficulties, they still had boldness from God to declare the gospel effectively and fruitfully to the Thessalonians a short time later (**1 Thessalonians 2:1-2**). As they made those declarations, they once again faced further opposition and mounting "conflict" (**1 Thessalonians 2:2**). After being driven from

APPLY:

Christians can expect misunderstanding and mistreatment as we live for Christ and share the gospel.



PowerPoint 7

The discussion questions can be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 6-1) and on *PowerPoint 6*, which is customizable. Files 6A and 6B are provided for customization.

APPLY:

Keep living for Christ and sharing the gospel despite opposition.

APPLY:

Our commitment to the gospel can serve as a testimony of its truth.

Thessalonica to Berea, Paul and Silas immediately went to the synagogue and began proclaiming the gospel ([Acts 17:10](#)).

Despite opposition and terrible treatment, Paul and Silas continued to preach the gospel. They would not be deterred. Their bold example inspired the Thessalonian believers to remain faithful, even in the face of their own persecution and opposition ([1 Thessalonians 1:6](#)). This was the model often found among the early gospel efforts of the apostles. The church expanded through the unwavering commitment of the disciples.

DISCUSS:

- *How should we view opposition to the gospel message? How can we let it motivate us rather than discourage us?*
- *When has the example of another believer inspired and motivated you to be faithful during difficult times?*

EXPLORE:

Jesus told us to expect persecution ([Matthew 10:16–18](#)). He said that if the world persecuted Him, the world would persecute His disciples as well ([John 15:19–20](#)). With perfect foreknowledge, Jesus took on human form and fully expected to suffer during His incarnation. It was challenging, even to the point of agony ([Matthew 26:37–38](#)). Nevertheless, Jesus’ commitment to the will of the Father did not waver ([Matthew 26:39](#)). He endured because of His willingness to do whatever was necessary to serve God’s holy purpose. If we are to properly represent the person of Jesus as we proclaim the gospel, we must also possess and display this same unwavering commitment to the will of the Father.

DISCUSS:

- *Why is commitment to the gospel more than a one-time decision? How might a commitment to the gospel increase our spiritual influence on others?*

KEY TRUTH: Faithfulness to the Gospel Is Characterized by a Pure Heart ([1 Thessalonians 2:3–8](#))

Paul reminded the Thessalonians of his and Silas’ pure motives, recalling the way they engaged and the substance of what they taught as evidence. As was his custom, Paul had reasoned with those to whom he proclaimed the gospel in the synagogue, utilizing Scripture to make the case that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ) and had fulfilled what the Scriptures had foretold ([Acts 17:2–3](#)). Thus, he had shielded himself from *error or impurity or any attempt to deceive*

(1 **Thessalonians 2:3**). Everything he taught could be fact checked and measured against the proven principles and specifics of the Scriptures.

DISCUSS:

- *Why is it important to do things for the right reasons? (The condition of our hearts matters to God; doing the right things for the wrong reasons displeases God; etc.)*

Paul and Silas had not employed “flattery,” merely telling people what they wanted to hear to curry favor with them or make their own lives easier (**verses 4–5**). Their mission had not been to elevate themselves in the minds of their hearers (**verse 6** – *Nor did we seek glory from people*), but to bring honor to God (**verse 5** – *to please God who tests our hearts*). They did not go to be served (**verse 6** – *though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ*), but to be of service (**verse 8** – *we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves*). Therefore, they had been *gentle among them, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children* (**verse 7**). Their genuine love for God (**verse 4**) shaped their sincere care for the Thessalonians (**verse 8** – *you had become very dear to us*), which then shaped all their gospel efforts.

Their motives were pure. They cared for those to whom they proclaimed the gospel in the appropriate way. The opinion and approval of others was not their goal. They did not work to garner fame or fortune. They were not combative, but gentle, caring for the people. They were personally invested in the relationships.

Our efforts to reach the lost should mirror this personal care. People are not abstract numbers or statistics. Souls are not notches on our belts. People are messy. Every redeemed person was once a sinner who was saved by grace and remains a sinner saved by grace. The challenging sacrificial effort to serve the kingdom by spreading the gospel and making disciples cannot be sustained without real love for others. Paul used the analogy of a mother caring for her children (**verse 7**). He repeated the parental analogy in **verse 11**. There are things a parent might not do for himself or herself, but good parents regularly go to great lengths for the sake of their children. This is the spirit with which we must seek to serve others if we are to reflect the love of our perfect heavenly Father.

DISCUSS:

- *There are some who accuse Christians of trying to convert people to simply win someone to their side or win an argument. How would you refute those claims?*

APPLY:

Make it your practice to do the right things for the right reasons.

APPLY:

Let love for God and love for others be your motivation for sharing the gospel.

- *When we share the gospel with the lost, how can we make sure we are doing so with pure motives and a pure heart?*
- *How can we cultivate genuine love and compassion for those whose lifestyles are vastly different from our own? (Instead of giving in to stereotypes and caricatures, get to know those who differ from you; ask about their past and genuinely listen to why they believe what they do; love them because Jesus does; etc.)*

KEY TRUTH: Faithfulness to the Gospel Is Characterized by a Consistent Witness (1 Thessalonians 2:9-20)

Paul and Silas demonstrated consistency throughout their gospel ministry. There was consistency among their message, lives, and methods. Their conduct was *holy and righteous and blameless (verse 10)*, consistent with the standards of Scripture and the character of Jesus. Their methods employed a mixture of exhortation, encouragement, and urging (**verse 12**); once again consistently reflecting the principles found in Scripture. They did not overemphasize certain aspects of God's nature and Word while minimizing others. Instead, they presented a properly balanced representation of the lifestyle (walk) God has called all people to (**verse 12**).

APPLY:

Let your conduct back up your words.

DISCUSS:

- *Why is it vital that our conduct is consistent with what we say?*

Likewise, our lives and conduct must back up our words. Hypocrisy cannot be present if our efforts are to be faithful to the gospel. Our methods must be wholistic, balancing the full nature of biblical truth. Jesus does love everyone and is a friend of sinners. He also made it clear that repentance from sin is an essential demonstration of the presence of true saving faith and that those who fail to place their faith in Him will have no part with the Father (John 14:6). It takes a variety of methods (exhortation, encouragement, challenge) to convey the fullness of the gospel (grace and mercy in balance with justice and righteousness, repentance balanced with forgiveness, holiness balanced with freedom, etc.).

APPLY:

Be true to the full message of the Bible.

DISCUSS:

- *Why is it important to present both the positive and negative truths of God's Word?*

Paul and Silas had also demonstrated consistency with the nature of the Word. They had presented the message for what it is: the Word of God (**verse 13**). They did not shy away from its authority nor downplay

the cost. They fully acknowledged how men had rejected Christ and those who believed in Him (**verse 15** – *and drove us out*). Opponents even made it difficult for others to believe by hindering the spread of the gospel (**verse 16**). We must be willing to pay the price ourselves if we expect others to see the worth of the gospel.

DISCUSS:

- *What does it look like to “count the cost” in our day?*

Finally, Paul and Silas demonstrated consistency with the mission of Jesus. Their concern for the Thessalonians was not only witnessing to them, but also a very real care for them (**verse 17** – *we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face*) as beloved family (**verse 17** – *brothers*).

It has already been noted that the gospel is not about numbers, but real people. That means our concern for people should extend beyond the moment they believe to an ongoing care. They ought to be *our glory and joy* (**verse 20**). Lives experiencing ongoing transformation by the gospel should be our aim.

DISCUSS:

- *Why is it important for our relationships with unbelievers and new believers to extend beyond the initial sharing of the gospel? What might this look like?*

RESPOND

Use one or more of the **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: To share the gospel, we must have an audience. One way to gain that “audience” is by building relationships with unbelievers. Encourage learners to think of ways they can build relationships with people at work, neighbors, etc. For most Christians, sharing the gospel won’t involve standing on a stage and speaking to the masses; it will involve one-on-one conversations in everyday life.

OPTION 2: Discuss having the right motives for what we say and do. It’s important to do the right things, but also important to do them with the right motives. Encourage learners to have the right motives for what they do this week. AH 6-3 *What’s Your Motivation?* can help your learners with this exercise.

APPLY:

Count the cost and proclaim the gospel boldly. Faithfulness is what matters.



AH 6-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 devotional magazines this week.



PP-6

Give copies of *the Parent Page (PP-6)* to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

OPTION 3: Discuss the importance of maintaining an unwavering commitment to Christ and the gospel. What makes that kind of commitment difficult? Why is it worth it to remain committed? Encourage your learners to stand firm for Christ and seek to share the gospel no matter the opposition.

Building Blocks:

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

God used the apostle Paul to establish new churches and to write a portion of the New Testament.

Pray!

Notes

