

THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW
Christianity In The Making: From Jerusalem To The South Bay
Acts 17

Digging deeper in personal study and reflection.

Since his conversion, this is the 6th time Paul has been forced by persecution to leave an area. How would you view your mission if that happened to you?

How does your response compare to 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6.

Looking back at Acts 17:16-30, the Stoics believed “god” was in everything and so everything was “god” (pantheism) while the Epicureans had little or no belief in “god” at all. What does Paul emphasize about God? How does Paul use their own culture to help them see the weaknesses in the way they relate to deity?

This past weekend we looked at Acts 17 and Bill said that the bad guys won in the city of Thessalonicatemporarily. Fortunately, tough times don't mean God's Spirit isn't growing and changing people's lives. Let's take a look at the letter Paul wrote to the Thessalonians and see how the young church not only survived, but also thrived in the midst of tough times.

Start by reading 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10.

Which of the qualities in vs. 3 do you most wish to see developed in your life now?

What surprising good news do we hear regarding how God is working in the Thessalonian church in spite of the persecution they were encountering?

How does what happened in Thessalonica help you endure when God seems to not be winning?

Paul wanted to encourage the Thessalonians to not only survive, but also thrive in the midst of challenging times. What instructions does Paul give them in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12?

Are any of these instructions important for you to consider when it comes to living out your faith as life happens?

What does Paul give us as our ultimate hope through tough times in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11? Does this help you, cause you to be more alert, affirm your hope during tough times or other?

I noticed that you had not responded to the question about whether you read these reflection and study question sheets and if you thought they were helpful. Use the comment card in the pew rack to let me know. Should we keep publishing them?



When I turned 60 I changed my life verse from **1 Timothy 4:12** *Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.* to

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Take some time to thank God for who He is and all that you are thankful for.

For discussion with your small group, an accountability partner, your spouse, or for your own reflection.

1. Were there any “ah ha’s” or “take homes” from Bill’s message?
2. Share one of the insights/discoveries from your personal study this week.
3. Whether Jesus or Caesar was Lord became a real issue for Christians. When has your faith in Christ led to conflict with other authorities claiming your loyalty?
4. In terms of time, consistency and intensity, how would you rate your Bible Study? Is it at all like the Bereans?
5. If someone made a statue of you, what inscription would be most appropriate?
6. What distresses you spiritually about living in LA? What specific needs do you see? What do you feel God calling you to do about them?
7. Who do you know that has very little or no background in the gospel? How would your witness to them be different than to someone out of a church background?
8. Paul uses Greek poetry as points of contact between these people and the gospel. How can you use movies, books, TV Shows, music, etc. as a way of relating the gospel more effectively to others today?
9. What do you think are the three or four crucial things a new believer needs to know in this day and age?