

I THESSALONIANS 1:1-4

"If I were the devil (please, no comment) one of my first aims would be to stop folks from digging into the Bible...I should broadcast doubts about the truth and relevance and good sense and straightforwardness of the Bible, *and* if any still insisted on reading it, I should lure them into assuming that the benefit of the practice lies in the noble and tranquil feelings evoked by it rather than in noting what Scripture actually says. At all costs I should want to keep them from using their minds in a disciplined way to get the measure of its message."

(J.I. Packer, from the Forward to *Knowing Scripture* by R.C. Sproul, IVP)

1. According to J.I Packer's quote above, what methods could the devil employ to stop folks from digging into the Bible?
2. Is there one of these methods you are particularly susceptible to? What can you do about it?

Paul has sent Timothy to bring him reports about the new Christians he has abruptly left in Thessalonica. In response to Timothy's news Paul writes this letter, his first to the young churches he founded.

Memorize I Thessalonians 1:2-4. Yes \_\_\_\_\_. I said it to \_\_\_\_\_.

Read the first chapter of I Thessalonians two times. Make your reading *prayerful*, expressing your dependence on God to show you the truths there, and make your reading *careful*.

3. From verse 1 what is known about the church to which Paul writes?
4. Comment on the importance of each of the following in verse 1:
  - a. God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ being so closely linked -
  - b. Jesus referred to as Lord -

c. Jesus referred to as Christ (Messiah) -

5. Neither buildings nor organizations can be "*in* God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." From verse 1 what is a simple and basic definition of a church?
6. In the very beginning of this letter, how does Paul let them know he cares about them?
7. What lesson can you learn from Paul's expression of his concern and appreciation for the Thessalonians?
8. Is there a specific relationship where you need to use this principle? Explain.
9. What was the immediate reason for Paul's thankfulness for them (verse 3)?

|    | <u>Action</u> | <u>Prompted by</u> | <u>Attitude</u> |
|----|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| a. |               |                    |                 |
| b. |               |                    |                 |
| c. |               |                    |                 |

Since many people work, labor (toil strenuously) and endure, we need to take a close look at the *attitudes* behind these endeavors that make them unique and praiseworthy.

10. Who was the object of their faith, love and hope?

The Scripture says "that which is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Therefore even a good or religious work done apart from faith is unprofitable. Let's take a look at an Old Testament passage to help us define what faith in God is - and what it isn't.

Read Jeremiah 17:5-8.

11. What two objects of "faith" are mentioned here?
  
12. As you work, do you ever stop and realize that in your attitude you are ultimately relying on mankind or flesh? Jeremiah says that one result will be anxiety in trouble. Do you ever rely on a) yourself \_\_\_ b) your husband \_\_\_ c) your children \_\_\_ d) your friends \_\_\_ e) other \_\_\_?
  
13. According to Jeremiah 17:5-8 and I Thessalonians 1:3 what is wrong with this reliance on mankind?
  
14. Give an example of work produced by faith. Does it mean we sit around and do nothing? Remember, we're talking first of all about an *attitude*.

Now let's consider what it means to labor, being prompted by love. I John 4:19 says that "we love because He first loved us."

15. What things from Romans 5:8 characterize God's love for us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
16. How do the above qualities give us:
  - a. a motivation to love?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. an example for our love?

