

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read I Thessalonians 2:10-12 aloud.

1. Who is Paul talking about in verse 10?

What was the relationship between Paul and the Thessalonian church?

Why is he calling attention to himself?

2. How important is it for a teacher to live what he or she teaches? Why does it matter?

What does Paul’s life teach us about what matters most?

Who is the best teacher you’ve ever had? Why? What did that person teach you?

3. In verse 11, Paul talks glowingly about fathers as spiritual teachers. As far as we know, Paul’s dad was not a believer. How could this help people who did not have a godly dad?

Who do you think served as Paul’s spiritual fathers?
Maybe Gamaliel, the rabbi who taught him. Maybe Ananias or Barnabs, two of the early Christian leaders who welcomed him.

Where could you find a spiritual parent other than your parents?

4. What does a good spiritual father do (12)?

How often do you perceive dads as being the spiritual leaders in homes?

How can you see your dad’s influence continuing in your life today?

5. Paul says that good dads urge their kids to live lives worthy of God. What does that mean?

What might make your life unworthy to God?

What is the significance of God “calling” believers? If you are called, what does that say about you?

How does being called motivate you to live the Christian faith?

6. Who is a father in the faith for you these days?

Who looks to you as a spiritual role model?

How aware are you that you are a teacher?

7. Paul reflects on the nature of teaching throughout I Thessalonians. What are some ways you learn?

- *Content/presentation – the actual information*
- *Observation – watching someone do it right*
- *Imitation – hands-on activity – trying it yourself*
- *Identity – understanding who you are*
- *Art & music – creative ways to grasp material*
- *Humor*
- *School of hard knocks – mistakes you have made*

What are some of the situations that have helped you learn the Christian lifestyle?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It’s okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

If someone followed you around for a week, what would they learn? What would they learn about the Christian faith?

Resources

Bible notes

I Thessalonians is considered one of the earliest letters Paul wrote. Read the whole letter and you'll be amazed how much it sounds like a personal letter from a friend, rather than formal instruction.

In Acts 16-17, you can read the story of Paul's first trip to Thessalonica, when the church was planted. The local Jews rounded up a mob, and Paul and Silas had to leave town in secret.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Imitate something that one of your parents does, preferably your dad.

For older kids, ask them to do it without talking (like charades) and see if the group can guess what they are doing.

Parents, what did you think of your kids' imitations? Were you surprised?

Read I Thessalonians 2:10-12 aloud.

What made Paul a good teacher? What do you remember about his life?

This letter is written as a teacher to former students to remind them how to live.

What do these verses say about how dads should teach their kids?

What is one thing you have learned from your dad or another adult?

Who has taught you about Jesus? What have you learned from this person?

While the adults do their discussion, give the kids art supplies and ask them to make something showing what they like about their dad.



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LIFE Group Guide

I Thessalonians 2 – Worthy teaching

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The theme: Good teachers live what they say, just like a good father.

This is week 3 of Kevin's series looking at how actions have a ripple effect. We considered the ripple effect of faithfulness and of generosity. This week, we look at Paul's ministry in Thessalonica and see how good teachers, like good fathers, live what they say.

Leadership tip: Some people were blessed with great dads, but not everyone. Try to help everyone enjoy this conversation, whatever their experience with their dad. The ice-breaker questions can give you clues where people are coming from. When you affirm each person, whatever their story, you will set the stage for a great group meeting!

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ Give the kid-friendly activity a try – your group will love it!
- ❖ Gimme five...funny or quirky things about dads?
- ❖ Who is your favorite dad from TV or movies? Why?
- ❖ What is your opinion of the vuvuzela? Should it be banned? *Yes, this is a real question. Your soccer fans can help you.*