

## HOMEGROUP QUESTIONS

### II Thessalonians 1:5-12

Paul is using the faith and perseverance of the Thessalonians as an example to other churches – Paul was quite familiar with the persecution the Thessalonian Church was likely suffering – Him & Silas had themselves suffered at the hands of the Jews in the Thessalonian synagogue (Acts 17:1-13) The lifestyle they conducted in the face of adversity and persecution could be a good model for others all across the continent.

It wasn't easy for them. Back in Job, Satan accused Job before God, saying that he only served God because it was beneficial for him to do so. God then proved that Job's commitment to the Lord was not because things were going smoothly for him. Instead, it was a steadfast faith that did not waver even amid the ultimate trial. Facing persecution and adversities, the Thessalonians also proved their faith in the Lord in the middle of difficulties.

**Question #1 - When you face persecution and affliction in a perverse world, do you endure? Or complain and give up? ...** We should view these experiences as a part of God's plan for us and an opportunity to grow closer to the Lord and depend on Him more than ever before.

Read Acts 5:40-42, Ephesians 4:1, Philippians 1:27-28. Suffering is one type of test that believers will go through. If a believer faces suffering and renounces the Lord, he has failed the test and proved that he is not worthy. If a believer endures, then he passes the test and shows himself to be worthy (or as worthy as we ever could be!).

This worthiness does not mean that we could ever earn our salvation or even pay God back for it. Basically, we can have a worthy response to God's grace, which is to believe in Him and repent. Or we can have an unworthy response, which is to reject Him. If Bill Gates pays off your billion-dollar debt even though you are a drunk and gambling addict, you are not worthy of that. But you can nonetheless respond worthily by turning away from your sinful lifestyle, showing gratitude for his gift, and then dedicating your life toward a more meaningful pursuit.

**Question #2 - How can you live your life more worthily? And, what does this look like today – in school, work or relationships?**

There are two dimensions of the relief mentioned by Paul. We can gain relief in knowing that our sufferings are strengthening us, making us ready for Christ's Kingdom. We can also gain relief in the fact that one day everyone will stand before God: at that time, wrongs will be righted, judgement will be pronounced, and evil will be terminated. In the remaining verses, Paul reviews how the punishment of non-believers and the reward of believers both occur on 'the day of the Lord' (**that day**) when Jesus comes to save his people.

**Question #3** – In verse 6, Paul says God will “*repay with affliction those who afflict you.*” **What does this teach us about God's justice and His timing?**

**Question #4** – In verse 8, Paul speaks of those who “*do not obey the gospel*”. **What does it look like to obey the gospel in everyday life?**

**Question #5** – In verses 7-9 there is some intense imagery here – Jesus coming in fire with angels, bringing judgement and vengeance! **What stands out to you about that picture? Comforting? Scary? Something else?**

**Question #6** – Paul says Jesus will be “*glorified in us and we'll be glorified in him*”. **What does it look like to glorify Jesus in your personal life?**

**Question #7** – In verses 11-12, Paul's prayer is full of encouragement in spiritual endurance... **How can we pray for each other like this – specifically, not just generally?**

**Question #8** – What does this passage teach you about **who God is** – especially His justice and mercy? **Do you find one aspect harder to accept than the other?**

**Question #9** – These passages talk about judgment and hope. Considering both the warnings and the promises Paul lays out, **how should it affect the way we share our faith with others?**

- **How Should it affect the way we live?**