

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

1st Thessalonians

Jan 2017

Model for Ministry: *A Shepherd's Heart*

INTRODUCTION

What characteristics come to mind when you think of a shepherd?

EXPLORATION

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5

Note: Crowns and garlands were used for rewards throughout Jewish and Greco-Roman literature of this period; not a royal crown but a victor's wreath is in view. Crowns (Is 28:5; Is 62:3) and garlands (Is 61:3) sometimes appeared as symbols of future reward in the Old Testament and in ancient Judaism. Paul's reward, however, is simply the perseverance of the Thessalonians themselves.

1. How would you describe Paul's heart for these believers?
2. What (who) stopped Paul from returning to Thessalonica? **Job 1:6; 1 Ki 22:19; Lk 22:31**
3. Why did Paul consider the Thessalonians his glory and joy? **Vv 19-20; Phil 4:1**
4. What concern did Paul have for the Thessalonian church? What did he do about his concern?
5. What about trials for the Thessalonians (and us)? **Mk 4:17; Rom 5:3-5; 2 Cor 1:4-6; 4:17 2 Tim 3:12**
6. How can Satan damage or discourage the faith of a young believer? Why?
7. How can believers become "established" in their faith? **2 Tim 2:19-24; Lk 24:45; Eph 6:11**
8. What goals and instructions do you think Paul gave Timothy before sending him off?
9. What are the results in Paul's life of investing himself in others?
10. How can investing your life in someone pay eternal dividends? **1 Cor 3:12-14**

APPLICATION

- As He told Peter, so Jesus tells us, "Feed My lambs. Take care of My sheep" (John 21:15-17). What person(s) is God putting on your heart today? How can you put feet on your concern?
- As a shepherd prepares for the hardship that he knows his sheep will face, what are some practical things you can do to develop those in your care for their trials of faith?

God has created us to want, to long for, to need friends and to have deep, meaningful relationships with others. God uses people to fill many of the voids in our life. One day, in heaven, God will fill us with Himself so completely that we will have no unfulfilled longings. For now, God wants to give us a foretaste of His ultimate fulfillment, through other people.

When we love others, it has an obvious benefit to them. But the benefit to them is not the only reason God asks us to love others. In addition, He wants to give us [the joy of] a deep satisfying relationship with others – that intangible "something" without which life is nowhere nearly as satisfying.

– Max Anders, *How To Live As A Christian*, p. 56.