



Life Group Notes: 'Building Doors' Tuesday 2nd July 2019

READ THESE VERSES TOGETHER:

1 THESSALONIANS 2:

17 But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavoured the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, 18 because we wanted to come to you - I, Paul, again and again - but Satan hindered us.

1 THESSALONIANS 3:

1 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's co-worker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and encourage you in your faith.

1 THESSALONIANS 3:

6 But now Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you. (ESV)

INTRODUCTION:

Sometimes when God has put something in our heart that we know is His plan and His will, there can be seasons of doors not opening, or doors not even being there at all. We pray, we believe, we pour our time, effort and finance into it but nothing appears to be happening or changing at all.

During these seasons we can often allow ourselves to become frustrated and discouraged. But what if we choose to look at it from a completely different perspective?

Paul had a clear direction and calling from God to be with the church in Thessalonica but reading 1 Thessalonians 2:3 we see that he said Satan hindered him. Paul had a deep desire to be with them to encourage them in their faith but was stuck in Athens. Instead of getting stuck in the problem and questioning why God had not intervened, he decided to take action in a very different way – a way that the enemy was not expecting! Paul decided to send Timothy instead, whom he had had mentored, encouraged and taught for some time. Timothy was like a son in the faith to Paul. This choice resulted in many people being encouraged and strengthened in their faith.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

1) Seeing beyond your own personal assignment:

- Paul tried everything he could to get to where he felt God leading him but nothing was working. Have you ever felt stuck in a situation, having tried as much as you can to change things? How did this make you feel? Please discuss.

Paul's perspective of Timothy is that he is a "*brother and God's co-worker in the gospel of Christ.*" Paul put aside his own situation and helped Timothy go further than he could at that time. He turned a road block situation into a road map for Timothy!

- Changing your perspective by helping others during your challenges is a way of God developing character in you and building others at the same time. Can you think of any personal ways you can put this into practice? Please discuss.

Further reading: Philippians 2:3-4.

2) Seeing beyond your personal discouragement:

Paul did not allow personal discouragement to take over – he turned it into encouragement by taking action and building a door for others. He was also greatly encouraged himself in knowing that the Kingdom of God had been advanced in this way (1 Thess 3:7-9).

Jesus said: "*I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.*" John 10:9.

- Discouragement can sometimes cause us to go through the wrong doors and seek fake pasture (see Proverbs 5:8-9 & Proverbs 5:5). Are there any areas in your life today where you need to close doors of discouragement and re-focus on Jesus, the true Door? Please discuss.

3) Seeing beyond your personal involvement:

Even if we're supporting others, don't give up on the doors opening for you! Paul prayed and trusted that God would make a way for him personally in the future (1 Thess 3:10-11).

Remember - God's tapestry is bigger than our personal ministry! God can open up doors without our help but we need to pray and have faith and help others (1 Thess 5:11 & 17).

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray together that:

- During times of discouragement we will not be distracted by a wrong door but instead we will train ourselves to re-focus our eyes on Jesus, the true Door.
- We will learn to put ourselves aside to help others go further than us by actively looking for opportunities and ways to help build and encourage others.