

January 3, 2010

Imitators of the King

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Today we begin a 3-month study of the books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians. The focus of these books is the return of Jesus, and how that prospect affects our lives now. We will try to learn more about the 2nd coming of our King, and how to prepare for His returning.

Finish this sentence: “When I was young, the people I most wanted to be like were people who...”

Was it a sports star? A movie or TV star? A singer? Someone successful in business? A parent? An older sibling, aunt or uncle? A teacher or church leader? Other?

Let’s review our text:

1. 1Thess 1:1-2. What a marvelous greeting to give others. For whom do you thank God? Why? Does that person know you thank and praise God because of them? Why or why not?
2. vs. 3. What are the three remarkable things about these Thessalonian Christians? How are you doing in the *work*, *labor*, and *endurance* categories? What enables these good qualities?
3. vss. 4-5. Has there been someone lately who has impressed you with their faith or love? Why? Did the gospel come to you with *words* or *power* or both? When was the last time you experienced *deep conviction*? What was that effect upon you? How are you to understand the fact that God has *chosen* you?
4. vss. 6-8. Is there someone you would like to imitate in Christian living? What qualities do they have that creates that desire in you? To whom has your faith served as an example? What specific thing have you done that seems to have inspired others to do the same? Has the Lord’s message *rang out* from you? If not the Lord’s message, what message does ring out from your life?
5. vss. 9-10. From what temptations or sin have you turned to serve God? How might your life have been affected if you had not done so? Would any other person know that you have turned away from being led by sin? Why?
6. Ephesians 5:1-2. In what ways are you showing the love of God to others? Have you sacrificed anything to show love to someone else? Would you be known as living a *life of love*?
7. 1John 4:10-12. What does it mean to you that God sent Jesus to die for your sins? How are you showing your appreciation in your actions?
8. 1 John 4:15-21. Is your life’s testimony being hurt because there is someone that you are having a hard time loving? Is there someone you cannot forgive? **John 13:35, Matt 6:15**. What is the danger in being unforgiving? How do you forgive when your emotions don’t feel like it?

What are the ways we might fail if we rely on our own abilities and skills to be a role model for others?

How does our hope for eternal life empower our witness to others?

What is your reaction to the idea of being a role model for others' faith?

- You gotta be kidding!
- That's scary
- God must be pretty desperate for help
- Maybe I could be, with help...
- I could do it as easy as anyone else
- I'm already seeking to be one
- God has used me many times in this way
- Other? _____

What do you need to strengthen your ability to model the Christian life to others?

- Someone to serve as a model on how to model
- Prayer support
- Encouragement from Christian friends
- A renewal of my own faith
- Other? _____

Action steps for the first week of the new year:

1. Thank God for the Christian people in your life, and/or for your church family. Name names: tell God something that you appreciate or admire in each person you name to Him.

2. Write a note to someone that has been a spiritual mentor to you. This could be a teacher, parent, minister, or another person with significant affect on you. Thank them for their example, tell them what that means to you.

3. Befriend a person, perhaps a young person, who needs some mentoring and Christian friendship. Find a way to pass some encouragement to them.