

Series: Strengthening your Core?

Scripture and Background Information for August 22-28.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

This week, we launch our new series, “*Strengthening your Core?*” With this series, we will look at how we, as a church, can make a difference in our world and impact it for God’s sake. We will focus on the center of our mission as a church. Today, we will look at **1Thess 1:2-3** and talk about “*Connecting with Christ.*”

Background for 1Thess 1:2-3

Right after the church in Thessalonica was founded, the believers faced persecution (Acts 17:5-9). Paul had to leave the church shortly after its founding. Timothy and Silas stayed in Thessalonica to help it get going. Although the believers faced persecution, the church flourished. Now, Paul wrote his first letter, trying to encourage them to continue their faith with the effectiveness they started.

Our verses today consist of Paul’s prayer of thanksgiving about the church. Paul recognized that the church in Thessalonica was a result of the grace of God. Although facing persecution, the church flourished and became a testimony for the gospel. In his prayer, Paul names three properties that marked the church of Thessalonica.

Questions to engage with the text:

1. Paul gives thanks to God because of the testimony of the church. What are the three properties Paul explicitly names that make him thankful? What does the church do with the three properties?
2. Based on the text, what could be the basis for the three properties?
3. When looking at the church of Thessalonica, how can our connection to Christ help others to connect with Him? What can the three properties that Paul mentions mean for our mission as church/for you individually?

Note: The church was not perfect. Paul had to correct the church (4:3-7). But, although the church faced persecution, with Christ on their side, they lived out what they believed. The church’s foundation was solid so that from that basis, they became examples for the people around them. The thriving of the church came through living out what they believed.

Scriptures for upcoming weeks:

August 29-September 04

1Thess 1:4-7

September 05-11

1Thess 1:8-10