

# Harvest

Evangelical Free Church

Prayer: Writing on God's Wall  
For Adult Bible Fellowships and Small Groups Meeting June 20-26, 2010

Join us in being on mission with God!

### OUR VISION

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

## "Supersized Praying"

*2 Thessalonians 1:1-12*

### Getting Started

*After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.*

**W**e teach our children that God cares for the smallest things in life—from sparrows to the number of hairs on our heads. What is the healthy impact of that kind of teaching?

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God does not mind "small" prayers, but when our prayers stay small they rob God of the opportunity to demonstrate his amazing love and power as he works through the ordinary people who make up the church. In 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12, Paul models some Supersized Praying as we consider the church and its mission.

- In verses 3-4 Paul celebrates two areas of spiritual growth among the Thessalonians. What are they? Why do you suppose these two areas captured Paul's imagination?  

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- What do you think God's Spirit has to transform in the lives of Christians for them to grow in faith? What do we have to be willing to change in order to taste growth here?  

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- As you look at the description of their growing love, what do you picture taking place among the believers? If this were happening in our church today, what might you see?  

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- Perseverance is a word that evokes images of tension, adversity, sweat, blood, toil, and pain. It's not something we often enjoy. What are some of the things in your life you've abandoned because you did not feel it was worth persevering?  

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- One of the great needs in today's church is for perseverance. The believers in Thessalonica lived out this virtue. What do you suspect their perseverance looked like as you read verse 4?  

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## 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. <sup>4</sup> Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

<sup>5</sup> All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. <sup>6</sup> God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you <sup>7</sup> and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. <sup>8</sup> He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup> They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power <sup>10</sup> on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

<sup>11</sup> With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. <sup>12</sup> We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. We often don't persevere in relationships, healthy habits, personal disciplines, learning experiences, or leading others carefully. What are some of the reasons we sometimes yield or quit rather than persevere?

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7. What reason for perseverance does Paul give in verse 5? What characters in scripture are examples of perseverance and this reward?

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Verses 6-10 describe two opposite fates. One is for those who persevere and finish well; the other for those who do not.

8. List some of the consequences for those who cause suffering for God's people. (6a9)? How is God's vengeance an encouragement to persevere?

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9. List the good things that will happen for those who persevere in verses 7-10. What encouragement does this bring to you? How can we practically pray for perseverance at Harvest? In what ways and in what areas?

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In verses 11-12, the prayer ends with 3 requests of God: (1) that he may count us worthy of his calling; (2) that he may fulfill every good purpose; and (3) that the name of Jesus may be glorified in us.

10. How does grace (verse 12) fit into these grand requests?

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11. How do these requests call us beyond petitions that we meet the budget, staff vacant offices, or find blessing in our worship services?

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12. What are some of the characteristics you would expect to find in a church where the prayers of verses 11-12 were being answered? How would Harvest be different? How would you be different?

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