

The Heart of a Disciple Maker

Sunday, June 30, 2024 ▪ Ryan Wildauer

Hearing the heart of a disciple maker teaches us to...

1. Prioritize face to face _____. *1 Thess. 2:17*
2. Be mindful of our _____. *1 Thess. 2:18, 3:5*
3. Live in the hope and joy of _____ labor. *1 Thess. 2:19-20*
4. Prepare for _____. *1 Thess. 3:3-4*
5. Invest in building _____ rooted faith. *1 Thess. 3:2*

1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:5

^[17] But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored 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. ^[19] For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? ^[20] For you are our glory and joy.

^[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 coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, ^[3] that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. ^[4] For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. ^[5] For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: Why do we serve other people?

Read & Discuss: 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:5

1. How does Paul describe his feelings for the Thessalonian church (vs. 17-18)? How would you describe the general tone of this larger passage? What do Paul's words along with his tone communicate about his priorities in life? To what extent do you share these priorities in your life?
2. Why do you think Paul was so intent on reconnecting with the Thessalonians "face to face" (vs. 17)? Given that some people are more introverted by nature and others more extroverted, what is your understanding of the biblical expectation for relationship between fellow Christians? What might justify exceptions to the norms?
3. In 2:3-6 Paul defends the integrity of his motivation for ministry among the Thessalonians. How does the sentiment of verses 19 and 20 further clarify the purity of his motive for serving these people? How would you articulate the difference between a healthy boast and an unhealthy boast? What might be opportunities for us to boast in the Lord?
4. In verse 19 Paul speaks about Jesus' coming, a reference to his eventual return, how much does the Lord's return impact your present motivation and priorities? How might we balance the tension of having awareness of that future while still living in the present?
5. How does sending Timothy to the Thessalonians facilitate Paul's desire for continued relationship? Given what we already know about the Thessalonians from chapter 1, what could Paul mean when he says in 3:2 that Timothy was going to establish and exhort them in their faith? Do you feel able to establish and exhort people in their faith? What would it mean for you to feel able? How might you become able?
6. Paul makes several references in these verses (v. 18, 3-5) to spiritual warfare; how do you protect yourself from spiritual attack? Do you think we focus on this too much or too little? What would be the implications of each?
7. Paul speaks in verse 5 about the possibility of his labor being in vain, how would you describe your current spiritual labor? How have you seen God bring fruit to your labor? (If you haven't experienced great fruitfulness yet, how would you imagine it?) To what extent do you think we should all be able to echo Paul in Colossian 1:28-29?

Reflection & Application: Think about various relationships that God has given you. Evaluate whether those relationships are motivated by love or obligation. Ask God for help growing your depth of love for those He has placed into your path. Choose two or three actions you could take this week that would help one or more of those people to grow in their relationship with God.

Prayer: Pray for one another that God would create continual fruitfulness in our church family. Pray for the gospel to take deep root in the hearts of our people. Pray that affliction provides opportunity for the world to see the reliability of our God and the confidence that we have in Him as His children.