

Exercise No. 1 OIA Method

1 Thessalonians, Chapter 1

I. OBSERVATIONS (WHAT DOES IT SAY?)

Verses 2-4. What encouraging words does Paul give to these Christians?

- *He is thankful for all of them (2a)*
- *He prays for them continually--and tells them (2b).*
- *He points out their strengths--their work, labor, and endurance (2:3)*
- *He points out that they are loved by God (2:4a)*
- *He points out that they are chosen by God (2:4b)*
- *Notice: He is positive about them--he doesn't begin by being negative*
- *Have you ever been deeply discouraged about something and you were ready to just give up?*
- *Did you ever have someone come alongside and encourage you?*
- *This first chapter in Thessalonians gives us insights into how and why encouragement plays such a vital role in the Christian's life.*
- *The finest gift you can give anyone is encouragement. Yet, almost no one gets the encouragement they need to grow spiritually to their full potential. If everyone received the encouragement they need to grow in the Lord, today's churches would blossom beyond our imagination.*

Verse 5. In what unique way does the gospel come?

- *With power.*
- *With the Holy Spirit*
- *With deep conviction.*

Verse 6. As a result, what did the Thessalonians do?

- *They imitated Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Silas.*
- *They welcomed the message, in the midst of severe suffering, with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.*

Verses 7-8. What was the result of their imitating Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Jesus Christ?

- *They became great models (examples) to other Christians in Macedonia and Achaia.*

Verses 9-10. What did the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia report about the Thessalonian Christians?

- *They turned to God from idols (they found in God was far richer than what they found in idols).*
- *They were serving God.*
- *They were eagerly looking forward to Jesus' return.*

II. INTERPRETATION (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

Does this chapter illustrate how we are to encourage other believers also? If so, how can we encourage others the way Paul did?

- *By being positive (not negative).*

- *By pointing out their specific strengths.*
- *By reminding them they are loved by God, and chosen by him.*
- *By telling them that you are praying for them.*

What are the implications of the words "always" and "continually" in verse 2?

- *Praying for fellow Christians is not a one-time effort.*

If believers can receive encouragement from reading the Bible, why is it necessary for us to encourage others as Paul did?

- *They may be too overwhelmed by a crisis*
- *Verbal encouragement can supplement Bible reading and prayer*
- *Verbal encouragement can be more specific*

These Thessalonian Christians could have given up because of persecution. What conditions can cause Christians today to become discouraged?

- *Not having a biblical worldview*
- *Feelings of worthlessness*
- *Hanging on to bad guilt*
- *Harboring a negative attitude about life*
- *Inability to please others*
- *Physical or verbal abuse*
- *Perceived unanswered prayer*
- *Lack of proper recognition*
- *Unresolved sin*
- *Financial pressures*
- *Health problems*
- *Unexplained adversity*

How can verse 5 encourage you when you share the gospel with others?

- *It has the power of the Holy Spirit behind it.*
- *You don't have to rely completely on yourself.*

What does it mean to "imitate the Lord"? (Verse 6)

- *I should live in a way that Jesus Christ can be seen in me.*
- *This is the opposite of others seeing "me" (old nature) in me.*

What principles can you gain from this chapter?

- *Encouragement will bring out the best in others*
- *The Holy Spirit convicts when the gospel is presented*
- *The best way to live the Christian life is to imitate Christ*

III. APPLICATION: HOW DOES IT AFFECT MY LIFE?

I am to find someone who needs encouragement this week

- *Church bulletin*

- *Missionary booklet*
- *Small group*

I am to select a way to encourage that person this week

- *Card*
- *E-mail*
- *Phone call*
- *Meet for coffee or go for a walk with them*

