

(Bible used = NIV 1984 translation)

Way in: As a group, think of ten words that describe what an ideal Church Leader or Home Group leader would be like!

Read 1 Thessalonians 2: 1 – 8

Question 1. ‘Teachers/salesmen’ offering new philosophy, new wisdom, or some sort of ‘new magic’, are not a 21st century invention. Thessalonica in AD51 would have a continuous flow of them passing through hoping to make their fortune. It seems likely that the population of Thessalonica at that time was no less cynical than the people of any major town in the UK today. When someone offers you a ‘free gift’, what is your reaction?

- a. How would you imagine the gospel, Paul’s ‘new religion’, was received by most listeners?
- b. For you, hearing of something new and exciting which you don’t have to buy, where does your cynicism cross the line into proceeding cautiously? There’s no such thing as a free lunch; or is there?
- c. Was the faith and commitment to Jesus that Paul spoke of ever ‘free’? Perhaps it only has a cost today?

Question 2. Verse 3. Paul states that with his gospel appeal he was not trying to ‘trick’ anyone.

- a. Is ‘trick’ a word non-Christians would use today to describe the gospel message? What words might they use?
- b. What ‘impure’ motives might there be today for making the gospel appeal?

Question 3. Verse 4. Paul writes ‘we (note - so Paul, Silas and Timothy are all entrusted with the gospel) are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts’.

- a. Does this imply that today the reason we have for spreading the gospel remains paramount to God? Can you detail what for you are your reasons?
- b. Can the ‘God testing your hearts’ have relevance for the reason someone ‘does good works’?

Question 4. Verse 7. Paul, Silas and Timothy were ‘gentle among you’.

- a. Was he right, and why?
- b. Is there a balance, when talking about Jesus, between being gentle on one hand and ensuring you tell the truth on the other?

Question 5. Verse 8. They also ‘shared their lives’.

- a. What do you understand this ‘sharing’ to be?
- b. What, if anything, does this teach us about evangelism and disciple making?