

Encouragement in the midst of Discouragement



Lesson 1

Parents, you are not alone

Text: 2nd Thessalonians 3:1

Focus for today:

Parents need encouragement

Opening questions:

1. What is the greatest fear that you struggle with as a parent concerning your child?
2. Why is this the greatest fear you have when it comes to your child?

Scripture:

2 Thessalonians 3:1–5

¹Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,

²and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

³But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

⁴And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

⁵Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Background:

Paul realized how special the people of Thessalonica were. He writes to thank them for always encouraging him as he ministers to others in different places. He came to realize not all people encouraged him like the

believers in Thessalonica did. As he ministered in different settings, Paul comes to realize how much of a minority he was concerning his beliefs. During a down time in his ministry, he writes this letter asking them to pray for him.

How does this apply to us today?

As Christians, we need to be encouraged, but also have to understand that we are a minority in how we raise our kids. As we face difficult situations and have unpleasant conversations with our kids, surround yourself with parents and friends that think the same way you believe.

Paul surrounded himself with people that believed the same way he believed. During times of discouragement, he found encouragement in others that loved him. We must seek encouragement when we are discouraged.

Reading verse one

“It starts with Prayer”

¹Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you

What did Paul ask for?

Did you notice who he hopes impacts their lives?

Who did Paul want to be glorified?

Applying this to kids, parenting, family, and etc...

¹Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you



Breaking down the text:

pray for us

word of the Lord

be glorified, just as it is with you



The Goal for today:

Kids will be influenced, it is our job to try to influence them with all the positives that we can.

Lesson 2

Dealing with situations we don't deserve

Text: 2nd Thessalonians 3:2

Focus for today:

Playing the cards we are dealt and accepting them

Opening Questions:

1. What has been the most difficult thing to accept when it comes to your children?
2. Can you find any positives in them?

Background:

Paul knows that the cards he has been dealt, he had no control over. For us, we have to understand will experience unfair situations. It is easier said than

done, but our children will experience unfair situations.

Reading of verse one and two:

¹Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you

²and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men;

for not all have faith.

What is the main concern found in this verse?

We have to realize who and what our kids are influenced by. The main concern is the influencers is lost according to our text.

How can we expect our children to be influenced in a Godly way when

ungodly morals and views are placed in front of them?

The answer is found in verse one...

¹Finally, brethren, pray for us,

It is important to have an established mindset that I/we need prayer and our children need prayer. To stand against the influencers we face

Understanding the giant we are facing

²and that we may [be delivered] from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

They are wicked and unreasonable
Why are they wicked and unreasonable? Not all have faith

As tough as it is, we have to look at people as saved or unsaved people.

So what should we be looking for?

²*and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.*

Deliverance from the situation.

2 Peter 2:9–10

⁹*then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,*

¹⁰*and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed.*

*They are not afraid to speak evil of
dignitaries,*

The word delivered means “to be rescued, or the person that rescues.”

Concerning our kids, we are the person that rescues our kids from unreasonable and wicked men.

Lesson 3

The growing pains of parenting

Text: 2nd Thessalonians 3:3

Focus for today:

Prayer establishes you and guards you from wicked and unreasonable people

Opening Question:

1. What is the hardest lesson you've learned as it pertains to your kids?

Background:

Paul now switches from him asking for prayer, but now wants to encourage the believers.

Reading of verses 1-3:

¹Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you

²and that we may (be delivered) from unreasonable and wicked men;

for not all have faith.

³But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

Growing pains happen because we do not like v's 1&2! BUT if we can live by those two verses, our faith will grow. As our faith grows, we start to notice God instead of the enemies.

The key for us as parents is co-existing in this world with unreasonable and wicked men.

We are called to live by verse 3 in two ways... establish and guard.

³But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you

from the evil one.

Notice what these two words mean in the original language...

Establish- to strengthen... or marked by firm determination

Guard- to have in custody of

As you live by this verse, you are making a statement by claiming what is yours.

As parents, we are called to make a statement by claiming our kids as ours.

Notice the progression from v's 1 to v's 3...

¹Finally, brethren, *pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified,* just as it is with you

²*and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men;*

for not all have faith.

³*But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.*

Praying establishes and guards us... it helps us concentrate more on the things we can control, rather on the things that we cannot control.

We have to believe that God hasn't forgotten about us and he is in the

process of establishing and guarding
us because we believe He is!

How do we know He is establishing
and guarding us?

He is faithful!

*³But the Lord is faithful, who will
establish you and guard you
from the evil one.*

Lesson 4

Trusting more, growing more

Text: 2nd Thessalonians 3:4-5

Focus for today:

*Trusting more in what we know,
rather than what we see*

Opening Question:

1. Do you have a kid that is a leader and another one a follower?
2. Does the follower makes their decisions what the leader says?

Background:

Paul ends this section of scripture by stating the confidence he has in the believers in Thessalonica. His focus once again shifted off of his problems and on to the people of Thessalonica.

Reading of v's 4-5

⁴And **we** have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and **and** will do the things we command you.

⁵Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Paul concludes that WE are in this together. We are all battling against the world in some kind of capacity. This is why we started this study with the emphasis on surrounding yourself with fellow believers. Not only did Paul have confidence in the Lord, but he had confidence in the believers of Thessalonica. His confidence included

being strong because he knew he wasn't standing alone.

Notice the progression of our verses...

¹*Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,*

²*and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.*

³*But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.*

⁴*And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.*

⁵*Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.*

When we glorify the Lord, He will deliver us, then he will establish and guard us. As He does this, we have no problem with Him directing us.

As we deal with the problems our kids face, let us focus on what we can control.

- Pray they will be delivered
- Pray that God will establish and guard them from the evil one
- And then watch the Lord direct their hearts.

Surround yourself with people that think, act, and believe like you. There will come a time that you will need them.

Lesson 5

The proper add-ons for the family

Text: 2nd Peter 1:5-11

Focus for today:

The add-ons will compliment your salvation and transform your life.

Opening Question:

1. What was the process of adding food to your children's diet as they grew older?

Background:

Peter writes 2nd Peter to point out the problems that were present inside the church and inside the heart of the believers. He focuses on adding things to their faith in order to fight off the enemy.

Text:

2 Peter 1:5–11 ⁵But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, (add to your faith) virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹for so an entrance

will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter makes it clear to believers that we must add things to our faith(salvation) that will complement our salvation.

Our kids need to see us adding these to our salvation in order for them to see grasp what living the Christian life should look like.

Did you notice what the end result would be if we add these to our salvation?

Godliness is the results that we are striving for as we add other characteristics to our salvation.

Did you notice the one right before Godliness?

Perseverance is key as we strive for Godliness.

Knowledge is good... faith is good, but if we are able to persevere, we will never attain Godliness.

If we can set the standard in our family and persevere through certain situations, Godliness starts to produce characteristics that other will see.

This world needs to see more brotherly kindness and brotherly love. But there is a downside to not producing these in our life.

Notice v's 9

⁹For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

The devil wants us to become shortsighted to the point that we cannot see the good characteristics that are found in us.

The sad part is that many have forgotten what God has done and cleansed them from their sins.

As a parent, do not allow yourself to become to the point that we have forgotten what God did for us as we accepted Christ as our Savior.

2 Peter 1:3 ³as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

His power has given us life as well as godliness.

Lesson 6

Developing your child's role in the family part one.

Text: Ephesians 2:20-22

Focus for today:

It is our responsibility to develop our child's gifts to compliment the family.

Question:

1. Tell me one characteristic your child inherited from you?

Background:

The book of Ephesians was written to Christians to build unity within the church. As we look at this section of scripture, what we develop inside our

homes is what we bring in to the church house.

Text: Ephesians 2:10

Ephesians 2:10 ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Notice in verse 10 who created us and why we were created... and the one command

¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

God created us in Him... not by Him
The importance is to realize that we have the attributes of Christ in us, it is our responsibility to develop them.

Did you notice why God created these attributes?

The good works created by God that we inherited from Him empowers us to do good.

As a parent, it is vital that we develop these attributes in our kids. Actually we are commanded to teach our kids to walk in them.

Lesson 7

Developing your child's role in the Family: Part Two

Focus for today:

*Building on a strong foundation
compliments everyone*

Questions:

1. What is a strong characteristic/
talent/attribute your child has?
2. Have you expressed this to them?
3. Are you doing anything to develop
this?

Text: Ephesians 2:20–22

*²⁰having been built on the foundation
of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief
cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole*

building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Background:

Paul encourages the people of Ephesus by reminding them that God created them to benefit the family of God.

We, as parents, should notice the strengths in our child and encourage them to use them.

Paul was doing the same thing in this letter to the people of Ephesus... encouraging them in who they are. Notice verse 20 and see where the starting point is...

²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being (the chief cornerstone,)

If we do not get the starting point correct, everything else will not go together correctly.

What are ways we can build off this starting point... the Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone?

Taking it a step further...

²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a [holy] temple in the Lord

Step one: get the foundation right (v's 20)

Step two: position to compliment the big picture (fitted together)

Step three: in the proper place, to develop and grow (grow into)

Step four: what our goal should be... (holy)

As parents, we should develop or position our children to succeed in life, but the that should not be our goal.

The goal is for them to be holy. If we develop their strengths, but leave out holiness, then we have missed the point! That is what verse 22 means.

²²in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Lesson 8:

Accepting our Roles

Focus for today:
You were called by God to do something

Text: Ephesians 4:11-14

Question:

1. Do you ever struggle with the thought that you are protecting your child from too much?

Background:

Paul is building off the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20) example to encourage the believers in Ephesus to realize they have a role in the Kingdom of God (the church).
Let this sink in...

You have a role in your child's life just as you have a role in the kingdom of God.

No matter what our roles might look like, we are called by God to equip. How do I know we all have a role? Ephesians 4:11-12 tells us what our role is

Ephesians 4:11–12

¹¹And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

Paul is explaining that we all have a role...then he answers what that role is in verse 12... we are called to equip. Many roles, but one assignment and that is to equip.

Equip means in the original language “as an instrument that helps set to complete.” This was used in a medical term meaning to set broken bones back together.

Think of equipping as parents that we are to be the cast that assists to keep our child together.

How many of us see shattered homes and relationships because parents have not accepted their role as keeping their child safe and together? Why is this such a big deal? Verse 14 answers it...

¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

Remember... equipping is being the stable safety net (such as a cast), if we do not accept this role, our kids could be shattered by this world...

If we are not the cast, they will be tossed and carried away in to a doctrine that is full of lies.

Did you see what the lies consisted of in this verse? trickery, craftiness, and plotting.

Reality check... we are not hindering our children by keeping them from this worlds lies!

What is the answer?

Ephesians 4:15

¹⁵*but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—*

How many of you have asked your parents, but why? Then they answer, “because I love you.”

We might be considered the bad guy, but the only reason we are considered the bad guy is because of the lies found in verse 14.

This is called the tough love of a parent... we want them to grow up knowing the truth.

Explanation of the verses... be the cast for your child because we want them to develop correctly instead of having

a deformity from something that could have been corrected. Accept your role as the cast (equipping) for your family.

Lesson 9:

Identity Theft Part One

Focus for today:

*Build our kids identity because
someone else will if we don't*

Text: Colossians 2:4-7

Question:

Have you dealt with an issue with your child that goes against how you believe?

Background:

Just like in our society today, many “philosophies” were being accepted. Instead of standing up against these issues, it easier to just stay quiet. The Christians struggled with who they were in Christ. Philosophy tells us one

thing and the church tells us another thing.

As a parent, it is our job to recognize that society will mold our child's mind and thought process if we allow it to happen.

Text:

Colossians 2:4–7 ⁴Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. ⁵For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. ⁶As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have

*been taught, abounding in it with
thanksgiving.*

Breaking down the text...

*⁴Now this I say lest anyone should
deceive you with persuasive words.*

It is the oldest trick in the book... can
you recall how sin was introduced into
this world back in the garden?

Deception with persuasive words...

So how is this trend broken?

*⁶As you therefore have received Christ
Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted
and built up in Him and established in
the faith, as you have been taught,
abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

Our goal as parents is to follow the instruction of verse 7.

1. Rooted in Christ- meaning to take root to the point that it no longer needs assistance in being held up.

Our number one goal is to be rooted in the teachings of God when our kids hear something totally opposite of what they believe, they question it.

2. Built up in Christ- means to come to an almost completion. Our goal as parents should be to not only root our children in the knowledge of God, but also build them in the knowledge of God. We should strive to build them up to the point that we can say, “you have been taught better than that.”

3. Established in Christ- means to be securely established... meaning at this stage this is the standard that we are setting in our house.

4. Abounding in Christ- means to exist in large quantities. Your kids take what has been established in their home as the standard. No matter what the standard is, they will abound in this when they are out in society.

As we develop this process, we have to build our kids up by establishing the standard in the house.

As we set the standard in our homes, we are helping them to develop a healthy identity in who God has created them to be.

Lesson 10:

Identity Theft Part Two

Focus for today:

*Things are important, but they are not
the most important things in life*

Text: Colossians 2:8-10

Question:

Is the reason that we might be paranoid of what our kids might face is because of situations that we should have responded differently in?

Text:

Colossians 2:8–10

⁸Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

*⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of
the Godhead bodily;*

*¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is
the head of all principality and power.*

Some of the hardest life lessons to learn can be reaching for something and achieving that something and then thinking, “that is it...”

Many things that our children are striving for will leave them empty. They are important to them and important to us, but they are not the most important things in life.

Think at this moment, think back to last lesson and think about what we are rooting our kids in, building in our kids, establishing in our kids, and what are they abounding in?

We are not trying to develop the next “Billy Graham,” but are we spending more time on the development of our kids physical makeup rather than on the spiritual makeup of our kids? Thinking about last week’s lesson and the importance of the four-step process of rooting, building, establishing, and abounding today we can see why that verse is so important.

Breaking down the text...

⁸Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Either way, this never benefits anyone, but always hurts us when we are cheated. Even if we attain something, the text explains the cheating leaves us empty (yellow).

The sad part about not living by verse 7 is that we cannot see it coming... the word deception in verse 8 means to make someone delusional... if you throw that in with the word it is connected to in verse 8, we see a dangerous combination.

The word that deception (delusional) is connected with is philosophy. Philosophy means an authoritative opinion that has been accepted as truth.

The big question now rests with what happens if the philosophy that has been taught false?

Do you see the importance now of molding our child's identity in a philosophy that is spiritual?

This is why it is important to think back to week one's lesson and be reminded to surround yourself with other believers that believe the same way you do.

Where do you see people becoming delusional about the truth that is found in God's word?

Colossians 3:2² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Parents, what are our eyes focused on?

What are our child's eyes focused on?

Lesson 11:

God creating Game-Changers

Focus for today:

We have to remind our kids that they were created by God and He doesn't make any mistakes

Text: Jeremiah 1:5-10

Question:

Do any of your kids struggle with confidence in themselves or are jealous of a sibling if they have one?

Text:

Jeremiah 1:5–10

⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”

⁶Then said I: “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.”

⁷But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak.

⁸Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you," says the LORD.

⁹Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.

¹⁰See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant."

Breaking down the text:

⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”

The reason this section of scripture is so important is to understand is because after this section, only experiences are collected between Jeremiah and God.

For parents, we have to understand that time is ticking away... just as God expresses to Jeremiah what he has been called to do, we as parents have to express to our children what they have been called to do.

What our children have been called to do starts with accepting who created them with the gifts they have. Who created them with the struggles that they have.

As parents, we have to accept that God created our children just as He planned them to be created. He didn't make any mistakes or got our child confused with someone else's child.

We love to quote the part of the verse, "before I formed you in the womb," but that might not be the most important part. The most important part is that He sanctified you. Meaning He set you apart...

He also ordained us. This means that He assigned us to duty.

This means that God set us apart for a specific duty and it is our job to use it to glorify Him.

In Jeremiah's next comment to God found in verse 6 and then God's answer found in verse 7 is that God doesn't need excuses.

The section ends with a powerful comment that we should be training our kids to live by.

¹⁰See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy

and to throw down, To build and to plant.”

God created Jeremiah to be a game-changer. He has created us to be a game-changer as well.

We can be a game-changer to break a trend that might have haunted your families for generations... you can change the trend... each generation has been called to change the trend.

Each generation has been called to change the culture for the better.

What is so impactful for Jeremiah is that he was called to change a culture that consisted of a nation!

When God created our children, He possibly could be looking for our kids to be the next Jeremiah.

As a parent, we have been called to be the next Jeremiah.

Where does the problem come in?
Possibly at the end of verse 7,
“whatever I command you, you shall speak.”

A game-changer accepts the challenge to be different even when they are hesitant.

A game-changer says and does what needs to be done even when it might cost them.

Parents, be the game-changer in your family.