

## **Called Up Leadership- Session #2 Small Group Notes**

### **Introduction:**

**On a board or piece of paper, draw a stick figure. Ask group members to say you traits of someone that have been influential in their lives. As they say each trait, try to draw a picture on the stick person to represent each characteristic.**

**Why did you mention these specific characteristics for an influential person in your life? What are ways that you try to model these characteristics today in your life?**

**Finish these statements: Leaders are.... Leadership is...**

We all have a couple of memorable people from our lives, especially those that taught us truth and modeled it for us. Often what we remember most about these individuals isn't what they taught specifically, but how they treated us. We are called to teach the gospel, and in today's text from 1 Thessalonians, we learn that how we model our lives as followers of Christ can influence others to share the gospel.

Even though Paul was a Roman citizen, he was thrown into the Philippian prison (Acts 16), with his feet put in stocks, all without an arraignment or a trial (Acts 16:24). Paul likely was still a mass of cuts and bruises when he arrived in Thessalonica. Yet Paul had spoken the gospel of God. Why did persecution not stop him? He had been emboldened by God. Divine aid, not mere human strength, enabled him to keep on teaching and preaching (refer back to last week about endurance in 1 Thessalonians 1).

### **Discuss:**

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4

Explain: Most of us will never face the kind of hostility Paul faced— beatings, prison, and riots— since Christianity is shrugged off as irrelevant by many in contemporary society. At best, believers are thought of as nice

but insignificant. At worst, we are portrayed as uncaring and condemning—or else as concealing some deep-seated flaw. We can learn from Paul to be bold and fearless in presenting truths of the gospel, aware that God wants us to have blameless hearts and blameless motives as we do so. Paul first described his teaching in terms of what it was not. It contained no error—that is, no faulty reasoning that could lead people astray. It contained no impurity—something morally objectionable. Finally, his teaching held no intent to deceive—he was not trying to trick someone in order to make a personal profit. The bottom line was that he spoke to please God. Everything Paul said and did was to honor God's name (1 Cor. 10:31). He was really unconcerned with whether other people approved his message.

**‘Why is boldness a necessary trait of gospel ministry? What is the difference in boldness and coldness in approaching someone with a gospel conversation?’**

**Verses 3-4 give us insight into Paul's motive for ministry and his approach to sharing the gospel. As a group, come up with a list of the things we learn about how to share the gospel from Paul's example. Ask: What parts of this list do we need more of in our lives?**

**Paul's motive for ministry was pleasing God. What are some impure motives people may have for getting involved in ministry? How do bad motives in ministry impact the spread of the gospel? What picture do they paint of Christians and the God we serve?**

2. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:5-8

Explain: Even in the secular world, leaders, coaches, and teachers who care about those they lead, train, and teach do a better job than others. Something is quite amiss with parenting that comes from the head but not the heart. In the church, how much more is this true with spiritual mentors and teachers. Paul's ministry balanced truth (sharing the facts of Christianity) and love (involvement in people's lives). Therefore, we fall far short of what God desires, when we try to focus only on knowledge of truth without a pure heart of sharing truth. Paul's ministry reflected a simple standard: We are not to be content with merely communicating the facts of the faith; rather, we should let our love for others compel us to give away our very hearts to fellow believers.

**Ask: What additional insight into a godly ministry approach do you learn from 1 Thessalonians 2:5-8? What does the statement mean to you, “care should come before content”?**

**How well do you balance truth and love in your ministry to others? Why is this balance so critical? What are the dangers of having one without the other?**

**3. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12**

**Explain:**

Paul had given the Thessalonians plenty of opportunities to observe his true character during his time in Thessalonica. He knew God had seen these traits in him as well. He used three adverbs to describe his moral behavior among the believers in Thessalonica: “Devoutly” refers to “living in right relationship to God and His laws.” “Righteously” refers mainly to “living in right moral relationship with other humans”—following high ethical standards of behavior. “Blamelessly” means “not open to a charge of violating high moral standards.”

On one hand, we recognize the goal for our lifestyle is the same as Paul’s goal for the Thessalonians: to walk worthy of the One who saved us. On the other hand, we see the challenge Paul puts before us as we seek to relate to other believers. We are accountable before God to live so responsibly and so blamelessly that other believers will welcome any encouragement and guidance we may have for them.

**From these verses, what does appropriate, gospel-centered leadership look like? What would the opposite look like? What does it look like for leaders to be bold, have integrity, and be servants?**

**Paul used three adverbs to describe his character and behavior among the Thessalonians—devoutly, righteously, blamelessly. What do these terms look like when lived out in everyday life?**

**What encourages you to model Christian truth in your actions? Spend some time in prayer this week to encourage each other as leaders of others in our gospel influence.**