

# Prototypical Living

*Scripture and Background Information for May 28-June 3.*

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

A prototype is the original copy of a product. It establishes the essential characteristics of the product and sets the standard for its proper function. It is an example that all other versions of the product must base itself on to continue to work properly. In many ways, the church in Thessalonica is a prototype for all other churches because it exhibits certain qualities that are necessary for a church to thrive. So, as we go through this series, we hope to learn from the example that the Thessalonians have given us so that we can take steps to live in this prototypical way.

## **Background for 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10:**

We know from Acts 17:1-10 that the Thessalonian church had an incredibly chaotic start. At the beginning, Paul and Silas seemed to have a fruitful ministry. There were a handful of Jewish people and a multitude of Greeks who came to faith in Jesus within the first few weeks of their time in Thessalonica. However, this angered many Jewish people in the area, and they formed a mob that attacked many of these Christians. Because of these attacks, Paul and Silas had to flee.

Even though Paul and Silas couldn't stay to develop these new Christians, it didn't stop them from growing in their faith. In fact, they seemed to become one of the healthiest churches that Paul ever wrote to because he spends over half this letter bragging about how great he thinks they are doing. The Thessalonians were known for their immense faith, hope, and love (1 Thess 1:3) and had become a great example and encouragement to many churches across the world (1 Thess 1:7-9). They were everyday people who had to persevere through many unfortunate circumstances but, through the earnestness of their faith and the grace of the Lord, they learned how to become the prototype for the church by connecting with Christ (1 Thess 1:4-5, 9-10), transforming in community (1 Thess 1:5-6), and engaging their world (1 Thess 1:7-8) in profound ways that impacted the lives of all who heard about them.

## Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. In verse 6, it says that the Thessalonians were imitating the Lord as they lived prototypically. What aspects of God inform our understanding of what prototypical living means?
2. What part of this prototypical living (connecting with Christ, transforming in community, or engaging the world) is most difficult for you? Which one comes most naturally? Why?
3. Brainstorm specific actions that each of you could do to live your life more prototypically. How can you, as a group, hold each other accountable to carrying out these actions going forward?