

SERMON PRACTICES

Houses of Hope: A Study of 1 Thessalonians

Week Three: Relational Discipleship in a Non-Relational World

Welcome, we're delighted you've chosen to dig more deeply into the Scriptures and consider what God has for you through this sermon. These sermon practices are ideally intended to be discussed with others, so find a friend, family member, or roommate to join you. If you haven't yet joined a life group yet, check out our website at vchurch.org/groups or stop at the Welcome Center for more info.

Getting Started

Before you start today's study, be sure you take a moment to sit quietly before the Lord, then have one person pray, asking the Holy Spirit to give you all deep insight into the Scriptures and the ability to receive his teaching and direction in your time together.

Reflection: Time Alone

Use this first section as a time of personal reflection. If you're with your group, just take a couple minutes to quietly reflect and/or journal on your own.

Think about the essential people in a person's life: Peers, Big Brothers/Sisters, Coaches, Teachers, Parents, Grandparents, etc.

- Who has played these roles in your life?
- Have you played these roles in the lives of others? Are you currently?

John Townsend says that we need relational nutrients as much as we need our practical needs met (food, water, shelter).

- When you look at his outline of relational nutrients below, what do you need more of?

PRESENCE

Acceptance - Connect without judgment

Empathy - Respond to what another is experiencing. Get "in their well."

Validation - Convey that person's experience is significant and not to be dismissed

Identification - Share your similar story

Containment - Allow the other to vent while staying warm without reacting

Comfort - Provide support for someone's loss

WARMTH

Affirmation - Draw attention to the good

Encouragement - Convey that you believe in someone's ability to do the difficult

Respect - Assign value

Hope - Provide reality-based confidence in the future

Forgiveness - Cancel a debt

Celebration - Acknowledge a win, both cognitively and emotionally

TRUTH

Clarification - Bring order to confusion

Perspective - Offer a different viewpoint

Insight - Convey a deeper understanding

Feedback - Give a personal response

Confrontation - Face someone with an appeal to change

ACTION

Advice - Recommend an action step

Structure - Provide a framework

Challenge - Strongly recommend a difficult action

Development - Create a growth environment

Service - Guide engagement to giving back

Exploring Scripture: Jesus' Command

Read Matthew 28:16-20

- Try to place yourself in the disciples' shoes as they witnessed these things and heard these words from Jesus. How do you think you would have reacted?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

- How do you see Paul carry out Jesus' command?

Reflection: Time Together

Use this section to reflect & discuss together

- What excuses tend to keep you from following Jesus's command to make disciples?
- What do you need to do in order to move past these excuses?
- Finally, share with your group about your time alone. Assess as a group, "Are we getting the relational nutrients we need from one another?"

Wrapping Up

In addition to any prayer requests, ask God to help you as a group meet the relational needs of one another so you may share that with those around you. If there are specific needs that have arisen during your discussion, pray for those in depth.