

## When The Going Gets Tough – God’s People Pray

1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

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**INTRO:** Take time to encourage one another by sharing some of the great wins God has brought about over the last year through your prayers.

**READ:** 1 Thessalonians 3 in its entirety.

1. Based on what you read in 1 Thess. 3:3-4, did Paul expect that the young Thessalonian church would endure suffering? How would you respond to a professing Christian who says that God wants us to be comfortable and well liked by all? Does this prosperity driven, pseudo gospel align with what you read in Scripture?

2. It’s clear that the church of Thessalonica was well acquainted with affliction. Likewise, “*all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*” (2 Tim. 3:12). What purposes do persecution, affliction and trials play in building up our faith and refining our character? How does God use the difficulties we experience to produce the fruit of righteousness in our lives?

3. Though this is not the only example of prayer in Scripture, it is worth taking time to observe how Paul prayed and what he specifically prayed for. Please complete the chart below.

<b>THE HOW &amp; WHAT OF PRAYER</b>	
<b>List 5 aspects that characterize Paul’s prayer in verses 9-13.</b>	<b>List 5 specific things Paul prays for in verses 9-13.</b>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

4. Based on your answers in the chart above what can you conclude about how and what we should be praying for?
5. Would you say that your prayer life is currently characterized by thanksgiving, intensity, frequency and faith in God's sovereignty? Which of these components do you feel is most lacking in your life of prayer?
6. Take special note of the final line of Paul's prayer in verse 13. How does focusing on Christ's return help align our prayer priorities?
7. How would you like to see your prayer life grow in 2019? What is one concrete step you are going to take to grow in prayer over this coming year?

## BREAKOUT

1. Paul's prayer was focused on thanksgiving. Jesus taught His disciples to worship God in prayer before making their requests to Him (Luke 11:2a). Take time to truly worship God for His holiness, majesty, faithfulness, mercy, etc. You can start by forming your prayers in the following way, "God I worship you because you are \_\_\_\_\_."
2. Share with your group based on questions 5 & 7 one area that is lacking in your prayer life and one step you are going to take to grow in prayer this year. *(Have someone in the group record these and share them with the group via whatsapp, telegram, email, etc. But be sure to keep this confidential!)*
3. Pray for one another with thanksgiving, intensity and faith!
4. Check in during the week to hold each other accountable, encourage and pray for one another!