

# Spiritual Multiplication

By Max Barnett

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

### Assignment One

Read Acts 17:1–9 and then turn to the comments related to 1 Thessalonians 1:5 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share how the gospel came to the Thessalonians.

### Assignment Two

Read the comments relating to 1 Thessalonians 1:5 in the section **It's in the Book**. “What kind of men” is a phrase Paul used to call attention to the quality of life he lived before the Thessalonians. He and those with him set the example. Be ready to share the importance of their setting an example.

### Assignment Three

Read the comments concerning 1 Thessalonians 1:6–8 in the section **It's in the Book**. Note the phrase, “You became imitators of us and of the Lord.” Paul set an example, and others began to follow him. Because he followed the Lord, they ultimately became followers of Christ. As they received the gospel, their lives were changed, they became examples and the gospel continued to spread. Be ready to share areas in which you can set the example and get others to follow you and Christ.

### Scripture to Memorize

*Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12*

### Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand what is essential for spiritual multiplication to take place as a result of their lives.

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## It's in the Book

30 minutes

### Real-Life Scenario

Suppose some of your friends were saying that many Christians are no different from non-Christians. One said, "Many people say they're Christians but don't live like it. I do not want any part of that. I want my life to really count."

You reply, "That's interesting. Sunday my pastor preached from 1 Thessalonians about the way the apostle Paul greatly impacted people's lives. He said that if we follow Paul's example, we could have that influence also. I agree that the Bible presents how to live a life of great influence. Here are some things I've learned from Scripture."

What would you say next?

### Spiritual Multiplication

**Read** 1 Thessalonians 1:5–10 out loud.

#### Studying the Passage

**Background to the study:** Acts 17:1–9 tells of Paul's time in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. He spoke on three Sabbath days before they no longer allowed him to speak in the synagogue. He was there some time longer, possibly several months, but had to leave due to persecution. He had to leave behind some new believers for whom he was greatly concerned.

Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to see how they were doing (see 1 Thessalonians 3:1, 5). After Timothy returned with a good report, Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians to send back to the believers in Thessalonica.

**Verse 5. Our gospel came . . . in power and in the Holy Spirit.** Paul reminded them of the power of the gospel he had preached to them. He was fully convinced the gospel was what they needed. Our gospel is not just words. It's a powerful message God uses to change people's lives, just as the Thessalonians had experienced.

#### Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share what they learned about the background of Paul's letter to the Thessalonians and how the gospel came to them.

#### Discussion Question

How can we share the gospel with confidence and the power of the Spirit as Paul and his companions did?

#### On Your Own

The first thing Paul mentioned that is essential to spiritual multiplication is being able to share the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Thessalonians 1:5). You do not have to feel powerful. The power is in the gospel. Who will you prayerfully share the powerful gospel with this week? List a name in the space below.

### **Studying the Passage**

**Verse 5. what kind of men.** Paul purposefully called attention to the quality of life he and his companions lived. Paul stressed again and again the tremendous importance of setting an example. Read Philippians 3:17; Titus 2:7–8; and 1 Timothy 4:12. **for your sake.** We do certain things for the sake of others, not for ourselves. Read Romans 14:21.

### **Assignment Two Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share what they have seen in the Scriptures about setting an example.

### **Studying the Passage**

**Verse 6. You became imitators of us.** Paul set an example so others could see how they ought to live. Read the following verses where Paul encourages others to imitate him: 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1 1 Thessalonians 3:7–9 Philippians 4:9 **imitators . . . of the Lord.** Paul set the example and got other people imitating him. Because Paul was imitating the Lord, those following him also began imitating the Lord.

**Verse 7. you became an example.** As a result of following Paul's example, now they became examples. Paul set the example in verse 5, and in verse 7 they became examples.

**Verse 8. sounded forth from you.** In verse 5 the gospel came in power to the Thessalonians, and the gospel spread out from them in verse 8.

### **Assignment Three Feedback**

The person who has completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share what Paul said about getting others to imitate us so the gospel continues to spread.

### **On Your Own**

In the space below, list specific areas in which you want to be a good example.

## **Heart and Hands**

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

### **Since Last Week**

5 minutes

Give the group this update: “In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . .”

### **Grace-Filled Accountability**

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

### **Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service**

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

### **Prayer**

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

## **At Home: Nail It Down**

First Thessalonians is the first letter Paul wrote in the New Testament. In the first chapter he tells us what he did to have his phenomenal ministry. He mentions four things he did that guided his ministry and should guide ours.

First, we must share the gospel in the power of the Spirit.  
“Our gospel [came] in power and the Holy Spirit” (v. 5).

Second, we must set the example.  
“You know what kind of men we proved to be” (v. 5).

Third, we must get other people imitating us.  
“You . . . became imitators of us and of the Lord” (v. 6).

Fourth, we then will see the gospel continue to spread.  
“The word of the Lord has sounded forth from you” (v. 8).

The pattern we see that leads to spiritual multiplication is clearly seen in Paul’s first letter.

- We can follow these great biblical principles.
- We can share the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- We can set a godly example with our lives.
- We can encourage other people to imitate us as we imitate Christ.

When we do these things, the gospel will continue to spread and spiritual multiplication will take place.

### **Follow up Question**

*How can you and I work together to apply these four great principles found in 1 Thessalonians?*

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.