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**"Start by asking: What will make God happy?"**  
[unknown]

## ENGAGE & CONNECT

Would you rather make a decision with unlimited time to think or have to decide in 10 seconds? Why?

## BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you."*  
[Psalm 32:8]

## BIG IDEA

As Christ followers, we make decisions within God's **framework of righteousness**, but there is FREEDOM within the framework!

## PASSAGE & DISCUSSION

### 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18 through 3:1-5

1. In v. 2:17-18, Paul expresses a desire to visit the Thessalonians, but says Satan blocked him. What does this reveal about Paul's relationship with this church and the spiritual opposition he faced?
2. In v. 3:1-2, why did Paul send Timothy instead of going himself? What does this decision show about Paul's leadership and priorities?
3. According to v. 3:3-4, Paul reminds the church that trials and afflictions are part of God's plan. How does this challenge the common idea that faith in Jesus leads to an easy life?
4. How does Paul's decision to send Timothy fit into the idea of making wise choices within God's framework?
5. We can often fall into "paralysis by analysis" when making decisions. What causes you to hesitate to act at times?
6. Paul didn't let Satan's opposition stop his mission—he adjusted and sent Timothy. What spiritual opposition are you facing right now that you can respond to without giving up?
7. Godly decision-making should be based on identity and purpose, not personal ambition. How does knowing "who you are and whose you are" help in making godly choices?

8. Read Psalm 23:3. What's a decision in your life right now where you need to prioritize God's righteousness over personal convenience?
9. Paul's love and "holy burden" for the Thessalonians led him to take action rather than just feeling concern. A "holy burden" is something that keeps coming up in prayer and doesn't feel like just a passing idea. What burden for someone OR something specific do you need to act on? Let's encourage, be accountable to, and pray for one another!
10. Holy play"—moments of joy and rest—are part of God's design. How can we more regularly incorporate both serious faith growth and joyful community into our gatherings?

## STEP OF OBEDIENCE

Today we discussed that decision-making involves faith, wisdom, love, and perseverance. How can we, as individuals and as a small group, move from waiting for a sign to acting in faith, knowing that God guides us within His framework of righteousness? Here are a few questions to consider *as we welcome whatever God has in store for us ...*

- How does this decision CONNECT *to a holy burden in my life?*
- How does this decision DISPLAY *who I belong to and who I am?*
- How does this decision RESPOND *to affliction that I'm experiencing?*
- How does this decision REFLECT *the love that I've received from Jesus?*

## PRAYER FOCUS

### Freedom Within God's Framework

- As followers of Christ, we are called to make decisions within God's word that provides the foundation for how we live, guiding us in truth and holiness. Yet, within this framework, God gives us freedom—to choose, create, and walk in His grace with wisdom and joy.
- As we pray, let's ask God for discernment to make choices that honor Him while embracing the freedom He graciously gives us. Let's seek His guidance, trust His boundaries, and step forward in faith, knowing that He leads us in love.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [1 Thessalonians 3 Commentary](#) & [A Church With Only 3 Weeks of Bible School](#)
  - Use these for background and encouragement before your group gathers.
- [Principles For Biblical Decision-Making](#)
  - This would be a good resource to use after your group gathers.