

An aerial photograph of a busy crosswalk with white stripes on a dark asphalt surface. Several pedestrians are walking across the crosswalk, and their long shadows are cast across the stripes. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

LAST DAYS LIVING

A STUDY IN I & II THESSALONIANS

“What the Church Should Be” (Part 4)

I THESSALONIANS 1:6-9

- 19% friendliness
- 19% children's programs
- 16% worship music
- 14% sermons
- 12% pastors

What People Look for in a Church

1. Quality of sermons
2. Friendliness of congregation
3. Style of services
4. Location
5. Children's programs
6. Knowing people at the church
7. Opportunities to serve

Top Seven Factors That Lead to Joining a Church

- A. They were known for working out their faith (vs. 3a).
- B. They were known for loving to serve others (vs. 3b).
- C. They were known for persevering with hope (vs. 3c).
- D. They were known for their election by God (vs. 4).
- E. They were known for their reception of the Word (vs. 5).
- F. They were known for their disciple-making (vs. 6a, 7).

**What Made the Church Worthy
of Emulation?**

KEY POINT:

A godly church is elect, exemplary,
enthusiastic, and expectant.

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- G. They were known for their willingness to suffer (vs. 6b).

**What Made the Church Worthy
of Emulation?**

*And we also thank God constantly for this,
that when you received the word of God,
which you heard from us,
you accepted it not as the word of men but as
what it really is, the word of God,
which is at work in you believers.*

I Thessalonians 2:13

*21 Brother will deliver brother over to death,
and the father his child, and children will rise
against parents and have them put to death,
22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake.
But the one who endures to the end will be
saved. 23 When they persecute you in one town,
flee to the next, for truly, I say to you,
you will not have gone through all the towns of
Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

Matthew 10:21-23

18 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

John 15:18-19

*I have said these things to you,
that in me you may have peace.
In the world you will have tribulation.
But take heart; I have overcome the world.*

John 16:33

*and if children, then heirs—
heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,
provided we suffer with him in order that we may
also be glorified with him.*

Romans 8:17

*For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings,
so through Christ we share abundantly in
comfort too.*

II Corinthians 1:5

*that I may know him and the power of his
resurrection, and may share his sufferings,
becoming like him in his death,*

Philippians 3:10

*For to this you have been called,
because Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example,
so that you might follow in his steps.*

I Peter 2:21

*12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial
when it comes upon you to test you,
as though something strange were happening to
you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's
sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad
when his glory is revealed.*

I Peter 4:12-13

“The early Christians found in their new faith not an avenue of escape from the unpleasant and trying experiences of life, but a power that enabled them joyously to endure their sufferings.

They found that their sufferings for the faith did not break their spirit or...



D. Edmond Hiebert

...embitter them;
they found it an
experience that changed
evil into something that
worked for their spiritual
good. The joy amid
suffering drew the
attention of the world and
was one of the causes for
the rapid spread of
Christianity. The depth...



D. Edmond Hiebert

...of a disciple's joy in the Lord may well be measured by the degree of his participation in the sufferings of the Lord. It is still true that those who pay a great price in suffering to remain true to Christ know a deep measure of this Spirit-wrought joy in their...



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...lives. Perhaps our
Christian lives are so
lacking in this joy
because our Christian
profession costs us
so little.”



D. Edmond Hiebert

*² Count it all joy, my brothers,
when you meet trials of various kinds,
³ for you know that the testing of your faith
produces steadfastness.
⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect,
that you may be perfect and complete,
lacking in nothing.*

James 1:2-4

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- B. They were known for loving to serve others (vs. 3b).
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- E. They were known for their reception of the Word (vs. 5).
- F. They were known for their disciple-making (vs. 6a, 7).
- G. They were known for their willingness to suffer (vs. 6b).
- H. They were known for rejoicing in the Holy Spirit (vs. 6c).

What Made the Church Worthy of Emulation?

- “an abiding inner thankfulness and gratitude which does not disappear when affliction arrives.
- Happiness shows up when things are going good. Joy is recognizable when things are not going good.

What Is Joy?

“A wheelchair is my passport to joy and peace in such a way I would never have dreamed possible.”



**Joni Eareckson
Tada**

“Joy, like nothing else,
shows whether we really
believe the gospel.

Joy is gospel
authenticity. Joy is not an
emotional buzz,
an escape from the
difficulties we face.
To know Jesus Christ
means to taste, and to
want to taste more,...



**Lewis Allen, *The
Preacher's Catechism***

...the delights of peace
with God the Father,
who cares for and smiles
on us, the Son,
who journeys with us,
and the Spirit, who
empowers us. Crushingly
hard days come, and
conscious fellowship with
God may be
overshadowed...



Lewis Allen, *The Preacher's Catechism*

...for a season;
but the triune God is with
us. He is our joy.
Joy in Christ and his
grace is the most
convincing sign that the
gospel has won
our hearts.”



Lewis Allen, *The Preacher's Catechism*

11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:11-12

*³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings,
knowing that suffering produces endurance,
⁴ and endurance produces character,
and character produces hope,
⁵ and hope does not put us to shame,
because God's love has been poured into our
hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been
given to us.*

Romans 5:3-5

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district...

Acts 13:48-52

*...⁵¹ But they shook off the dust from their feet
against them and went to Iconium.*

*⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with
the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 13:48-52

*For you had compassion on those in prison,
and you joyfully accepted the plundering of
your property, since you knew that you
yourselves had a better possession and an
abiding one.*

Hebrews 10:34

*Rejoice in the Lord always;
again I will say, rejoice.*

Philippians 4:4

- C. They were known for persevering with hope (vs. 3c).
- D. They were known for their election by God (vs. 4).
- E. They were known for their reception of the Word (vs. 5).
- F. They were known for their disciple-making (vs. 6a, 7).
- G. They were known for their willingness to suffer (vs. 6b).
- H. They were known for rejoicing in the Holy Spirit (vs. 6c).
- I. They were known for impacting their community (vs. 8-9).

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