

STUDY NOTES

THROUGH THE DESERT

a Series At New City Church

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message “The Wall and the Will of God” on 8/11/19 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:13-18

LOOKING FOR GOD’S WILL IN THE DESERT

If people find themselves in a dry seasons spiritually, they usually want to discern what God’s will is for their life. They hope that God’s will for them is to get out of the desert. However, Paul very plainly tells us the will of God. The will of God is that we would rejoice in all circumstances and pray without ceasing.

- *Why do you think we don't want to hear this as the will of God for our lives? What sort of answers do we want from God instead?*

In 1 Thessalonians 4:3 he says, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification.” Sanctification is the process of devoting one’s life to God. The will of God is that we dedicate our lives to the worship of God in all of life. Paul’s point for us is that the will of God for us is that we’d become spiritual adults.

The will of God for you is that you would grow up.

- *Why do you think God's will for us revolves around our devotion to him rather than specific decisions? How does that change the way you seek God's will for your life?*

GROWING UP SPIRITUALLY MATURE

Paul constantly picks up this theme of maturity; but he doesn’t just call others to it, he lives this maturity himself. He says, “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.” (1 Corinthians 13:11)

The will of God is that the church would be made up of spiritually healthy people.

As a part of the development process, it is natural for people to hit a wall. As people grow up in faith, it is natural for God to take off the spiritual training wheels. God does this because he doesn’t want his people to stay as spiritual infants.

- *What does it feel like to have the spiritual training wheels taken off in life?*
- *How have you seen past moments when God took the spiritual training wheels off work for your maturity?*

FLESH VS FAITH

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-3. Paul says, you are a child because you are living from the flesh. Above all, you want to satisfy your flesh. When we hit a spiritual wall we first look for an emotional hit from God. The problem with that is that people begin to think that if they do the right things, then they will feel God. People think that the more they read, pray, or sing worship songs, the more they should feel God. While those are good things to do, they are ultimately works of the flesh.

The way to maturity is to live by faith in the Spirit of God given to us.

- *How have you experienced this—working in the flesh to try to feel God's presence? How does this mentality lead to legalism?*
- *In your own words, how could you describe the difference between working in the flesh and living in faith?*
- *Pray with each other to live by faith in the Spirit of God.*