

## SCRIPTURES FOR 11/12/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

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### **1 Thessalonians 1:7-8 (The Message)**

Do you know that all over the provinces of both Macedonia and Achaia believers look up to you? The word has gotten around. Your lives are echoing the Master's Word, not only in the provinces but all over the place. The news of your faith in God is out.

### **Acts 2:42-47**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

### **2 Peter 1:20-21**

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

### **James 5:16**

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

### **John 4:23-24**

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

### **John 13:35**

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

### **Luke 10:27**

He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

<p>NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed</p>
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**NOTE TO LEADERS:** All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

## INTRODUCTION:

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Church health is an interesting subject. The Natural Church Development gurus would contend that a church is less an organization than an organism. It grows more like a plant or animal than a business. If it stands still, it dies. If it is isolated, it dies. If it is undernourished, it dies. But if it is active, relational, and well-fed, it grows. Organisms do not really exist in stasis; they are growing or dying. It is the same with churches. Anyone who has been around the church for long and is honest with themselves would agree. Applying the latest business growth principle to a church is like trying to feed livestock with gasoline. It just don't work...

## FIRST-CENTURY CHURCH HEALTH

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*Read 1 Thessalonians 1:7-8 from The Message..*

Don't you wish people were saying, "The word is out. Those folks at WCC are really on fire for Jesus. If you want to know what Christianity is all about, go check them out!" This sort of impact is the natural bi-product of a healthy Christian church.

You may wonder whether WCC is having this kind of impact. We look healthy enough. We feel healthy. But, looks can be deceiving. You can look and feel healthy and still be dying.

Do you think WCC is healthy? Why or why not?

Are there parts that are healthy and others that are sick?

Regarding WCC, what do you think is the "word on the street?"

*Have someone read Acts 2:42-47.*

From this passage, Jeff sifted out five qualities of a healthy church.

## HEALTHY CHURCHES STUDY.

*Have someone read 2 Peter 1:20-21.*

That first church "devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching," spoken "from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit," but what can we do? Do we wait for a prophet? (*no, we have the Scripture*)

## HEALTHY CHURCHES PRAY.

*Have someone read James 5:16.*

Have you ever told someone you would pray for them and then forgot all about it?

Why is prayer "easier said than done?"

Besides sick people, what should we pray for?

## HEALTHY CHURCHES WORSHIP.

*Have someone read John 4:23-24.*

Does this have anything to do with "worship style?" Are there some environments where you have difficulty worshipping?

What is worshipping "in spirit and in truth?" (*balance feelings and revelation, study and prayer, order and openness*)

## HEALTHY CHURCHES LOVE GOD & OTHERS

*Have someone read John 13:35 & Luke 10:27.*

'Nuff said.

## CONCLUSION

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If we are doing these things, we should be "enjoying the favor of all the people" and be adding "daily those who were being saved." We will be like the church in Thessalonica, whose reputation for contagious Christianity was known "all over the place."

We are doing these things in our LIFEGROUPS, but not everyone is in one. We don't need to create new programs! We need to draw people into the ones we already have. Start inviting your friends, saved and unsaved. If your group gets unmanageably large, we will add more groups. Let's help the Lord to add to our number daily those who are being saved. Amen?