



Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups

The Power and The Pleasure of Being Under Pressure

Preached by Daniel Grothe

October 4, 2026

Summary

Have someone in your group read the following summary aloud.

Pastor Daniel introduced the theme of enduring faithfully under pressure.

Drawing from 1 Thessalonians 1 and Acts 17, he paints a vivid picture of a young church in Thessalonica that faced intense persecution, public humiliation, and even imprisonment, yet continued to work, labor in love, and endure with hope in Jesus Christ. Paul's letter to them is a pastoral word of affirmation, celebrating their faithfulness and noting how their witness had spread throughout the region.

The pastor connects this Biblical story to the 42-year journey of New Life Church, reminding us that enduring pressure is not a sign of doing something wrong but often of doing something right. He emphasized that the joy given by the Holy Spirit is what sustains believers through suffering, and that a community of faith rooted in the resurrected hope of Jesus has nothing to fear. He called us to keep going, stay in love with Jesus, and recognize that faithfulness under pressure becomes a powerful witness to the surrounding world.

Key Passages

- 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
- Acts 17:1-9
- Isaiah 30:21
- Psalm 1:3
- Hebrews 12:2

Opening Prayer

Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own

Heavenly Father, we come to You today with open hearts and willing spirits.

Thank You for gathering us as a family of faith. As we open Your Word and discuss what it means to endure under pressure, we ask that You speak directly to each of us. Remove any distractions, pride, and fear that might keep us from hearing what You want to say to us today. Holy Spirit, lead our conversation, stir our hearts, and help us to receive both the challenge and the encouragement You have for us. We trust You, Lord, and we give You permission to change us through this time together. In Jesus name we pray, **Amen**.

Getting Going

Allow time for each member to answer the following questions before moving on.

What is one activity or skill you practiced so much as a kid that you eventually felt confident doing it under pressure?

Discussion Questions

Answer as many of these questions as time and interest allow.

1. Paul opens his letter by thanking God for the Thessalonians' work produced by faith, labor prompted by love, and endurance inspired by hope. Which of these three qualities feels most natural to you right now, and which one feels most challenging?
2. Pastor Daniel said that if following Jesus has ever been difficult, you are probably doing something right. Do you agree? How does it change the way you view the hard seasons of your faith journey?
3. The Thessalonian believers welcomed the gospel message in the midst of severe suffering with joy given by the Holy Spirit. Have you ever experienced a season where God gave you joy that did not match your circumstances? What did that feel like?
4. Early believers in Thessalonica essentially declared that Jesus is King, even at great personal cost. What are some modern-day pressures or cultural expectations that make it costly to publicly declare Jesus as Lord?
5. Paul noted that the faith of the Thessalonians had become known everywhere, and their witness was spreading throughout the region without him even having to say anything. What does it look like for a community of believers today to have that kind of contagious, outward-facing witness?

6. Pastor Daniel drew a distinction between ungodly pride and a godly kind of pride that celebrates the faithfulness of others. Who in your life deserves to hear words of blessing and affirmation for the way they have endured?
What is holding you back from telling them?
7. The sermon highlighted that the Thessalonians put their faith in Jesus to work, their love for Jesus into labor for others, and their hope in Jesus into endurance through threats. How are faith, love, and hope practically connected in your own daily life right now?
8. Pastor Daniel closed by encouraging the congregation to keep calling on the name of Jesus, especially in moments of confusion, fear, or suffering. How does simply returning to the name of Jesus help reorient you when life feels overwhelming?

Making It Personal

Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life.

This week, identify one area of your life where you have been tempted to quit, back down, or stay silent about your faith because of pressure or fear. Make a deliberate choice to take one small but courageous step forward in that area. It might mean having a conversation you have been avoiding, returning to a spiritual discipline you have let slip, or simply speaking a word of blessing and encouragement to someone who has been faithfully enduring. Write down what

you plan to do and share it with someone in this group so they can pray for you and follow up with you.

Key Takeaways

Commit to memory one point from the message before dismissing.

- Enduring pressure as a follower of Jesus is not a sign of failure. It is often a confirmation that you are walking faithfully in the right direction.
- The Holy Spirit gives joy amid suffering, and that joy becomes one of the most powerful witnesses a believer can offer to the world around them.
- Faith, love, and hope are not passive feelings. They produce active work, labor for others, and endurance to keep going when things are hard.
- A community of believers that refuses to quit under pressure becomes a testimony that echoes far beyond its own walls, inspiring and strengthening other believers in distant places.
- Words of godly affirmation and blessing - telling someone you are proud of them and calling out the best in them – is a powerful spiritual gift that we should give freely to those around us.

Closing Prayer

Have someone from your group close your time in prayer, using the words below or your own.

Lord Jesus, thank You for the time we have shared together today around Your Word. Thank You for the example of the Thessalonian church, ordinary people who chose to keep going when it would have been so much easier to walk away. We ask that You plant that same kind of gritty, resurrection-rooted faith deep in each of us. Where we have been tempted to quit, renew our strength. Where we have been ashamed, restore our courage. Where we have forgotten the power of Your name, remind us again that Your name is above every name. Holy Spirit, go with each person as they leave this place today. May the joy You give be their strength this week. May their faithfulness become a witness to the people around them. And may all the glory go to You alone. We pray this together in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**