

**Studies in the Book of 1 Thessalonians**  
**Lesson 4 – 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13**  
**Hope for a Hopeless World**  
**Good News from Timothy**

The two-fold ministry of the Word of God and prayer is what establishes a church. If there is all teaching and preaching and no prayer, then the people will have light but no power. If there is all prayer but no teaching of the Word, you may have a group of enthusiasts who have more heat than light! The pastor, Sunday School teacher, missionary, or Christian worker who talks to God about his people, and then talks to his people about God, will have a balanced and established ministry. Christ's ministry consisted of both the Word and prayer.

Paul's concern was not so much their safety or happiness, but their faith. The word "faith" is used five times in this chapter. Satan is the enemy of our faith, for if he can get us to doubt God and His Word, he will rob us of the enjoyment of every blessing we have in Christ. Paul wanted to see these people abounding in love, established in hope, and growing in faith. There is no substitute for a consistent prayer life.

When there is a combined ministry of prayer and the Word, Satan is defeated and the church is established. No truth establishes the believer faster or better than this one. In the midst of testing and tribulation, these believers could assure and encourage themselves with the promise of His coming. When temptations came their way, as they did daily in those heathen cities, they could keep themselves clean by remembering that Christ might come that very day. If weary of laboring and witnessing, they could take on new strength and courage by looking for His return. No truth in the Bible has a greater effect on the believer's heart, mind, and will than the truth of the second coming of Christ.

Paul was anxious that their hearts be established blameless. Christians are supposed to be blameless and harmless. This does not mean they are sinless, for perfection is not possible until Christ returns. The little child, copying his name on the blackboard, does not perform faultlessly, because he is only a child; but if he does the best he can, he is blameless. If we live up to the light God has given us and seek to grow in Him, we can live lives that are blameless in God's sight. The daily hope of Christ's return will help the believer keep his or her life holy.

**Read 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 and answer the following questions**

1. Why do you think faith and love are so important to Paul's message in view of the Thessalonians circumstances?

2. What did Paul mean when he acknowledged that the Thessalonians were, "standing fast in the Lord"? (See 3:8)

3. Paul was certainly a believer in frequent and continuous prayer. Why is persistence in prayer so important? (See 1:2-3, 3:10)

4. Why do you think it was so important to Paul that he get back to the Thessalonians? (See 3:10)

5. What prayer did Paul offer regarding the Thessalonians? (See 3:10). What can we learn about prayer from this verse?

6. Paul asks God for three things in 3:11-13. List them and explain their purpose?

3:11

3:12

3:13

7. So far, Paul has closed every chapter in 1 Thessalonians with a reference to Christ's return (1:10, 2:19, 3:13). What do you think his purpose was in doing this?

8. By now you can see that spiritual parenting is a theme of this letter. When Paul was with the Thessalonians he acted as a spiritual mother and father to them. Their growth gave him the joy that a child's success gives most parents. What bond made this possible between Paul and his spiritual kids?

9. Have you personally ever had a spiritual parent like this? Explain.

10. What hope did Paul express in 3:13? Define "blameless." Why is this trait important to Christians?

11. Define "holiness." Why is this trait important to Christians?

## Great Word from the Word in Life Study Bible

### Gentle as a Nursing Mother

Paul felt great love for the Thessalonian believers, and he drew upon a touching image to communicate his affection, that of a woman nursing an infant (1 Thess. 2:7). Most mothers in the first century world nursed their own infants. However, some wealthy women employed wet nurses. In that case, the child lived in the home of the wet nurse, who agreed to certain conditions. Such as not nursing other children and avoiding alcohol. The wet nurse took responsibility for not only feeding the child but also for raising it until it was weaned, often up to three years of age. Many contracts specified that the wet nurse fee had to be returned if the child died.

Paul, clearly intended to convey a sense of tender affection and responsible loving care for his spiritual children, the Thessalonians. In doing so, he showed a side of spiritual leadership and nurture that Christian leaders do well to emulate today.