

Are we so moved by concern for our fellow believers that we long to hear how they are doing, that they are standing strong? In I Thessalonians 2, Paul likens his relationship with these precious believers as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children (2:7) and as a father would care for his children (2:11). A parent loves, nurtures, and protects their children. As Paul moves into chapter three, he continues to show his love by sending Timothy to strengthen and encourage them and make sure that no one was disturbing their faith through the afflictions they were suffering.

Today, we seem to be able to justify our lack of concern by the busy-ness of the day. Does the phrase, “I don’t have time for that!” sound familiar? Jesus said the greatest commandment was to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind and love your neighbor as yourself. In Luke 10:25-37 a lawyer, trying to justify his indifference towards others, asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” How did Jesus answer him? He told him the story of the good samaritan. Those we see in need, those who are hurting, those who need a friend, those who need encouraging and strengthening — they are our neighbors. Love them!

Let’s follow Paul’s example as we continue our study in I Thessalonians.

DAY ONE

Begin your study in prayer and ask for wisdom and guidance in your study. Today, your task is to see Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy’s hearts toward the Thessalonians.

1. Read through the following questions and then read I Thessalonians 1-3 searching for the answers. Record what you learn.
 - a. According to I Thessalonians 2:17-20, what was their desire and what had happened that created that desire?

- b. How did they accomplish this desire according to chapter 3?

 - c. Explain their concern in chapter three and why they had that concern.

 - d. Is this something that we should also be concerned about with new believers today, and, if so, why?
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- 2. Do you have a responsibility to those you may have led to Christ? How about other new believers you know?
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- 3. Read through these three chapters once again. As you do, take note of how chapter three relates to the first two chapters. What is the therefore in 3:1 there for?

DAY TWO

1. Complete a thorough chapter overview of I Thessalonians 3. The steps are listed back in lesson two pages 15-17 if you need to refer to them as a reminder.
2. In these chapters, God has been presenting an example for you and I to follow. Have you seen it? A couple of weeks ago we looked at the definition of exemplary. Exemplary means “to serve as a desirable model; representing the best of its kind.” That word is very applicable to what we have seen in these first three chapters.
 - chapter 1 - An Exemplary Conversion
 - chapter 2 - An Exemplary Witness
 - chapter 3 - An Exemplary Follow-Up

In chapter one you saw what happened when people truly turned to God and were born again. There was a change of life, a change that could be seen. They went from being imitators to being examples everywhere they went. Everyone who encountered them knew that they were serving the living and true God.

In chapter two you observed how Paul lived among the people. They brought the Gospel not just in word but in deed as well. They proved to be loving examples living among the people. They were examples worthy of being followed as Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus encouraged them to follow them as they followed Christ.

In chapter three you are now shown how to nurture those who are brought to faith through the Gospel. How do you help them? How do you pray for them? How do you encourage and strengthen them? The answers are here.

As Paul made his three missionary journeys, there were many who came to the Lord through faith and became true believers, but it didn't take long before they began to run into opposition. Paul's Epistles were follow-up letters to help strengthen new believers. They were written to help these new believers grow and be trained in the ways of God. They were instruction manuals that encouraged them in the Christian lifestyle and helped them to stand strong in the midst of persecution so they would not waver in their faith.

Today, almost 2,000 years later, God still speaks to us through Paul and the other apostles for the same reason. God's Word is a believer's strength to stand in the storms of life we encounter everyday. As we walk in a dark world, His Word acts as a lamp to our feet — it shows us how to walk in a manner worthy of our calling, to please Him in all we do (Ps 119:105; Eph 4:1; Col 1:10).

3. Let's take a look at Paul's relationship with the Corinthians.

a. Read I Corinthians 3:5-10. Who laid the foundation of their faith and how did that come to be?

b. By reading these verses, how does the Gospel come?

c. Now read I Corinthians 4:14-21. How does Paul deal with the Corinthians and why? Is he right in his words and actions? Why?

d. According to these two passages in I Corinthians, what can you learn about the responsibility to follow-up with new believers?

- b. Even though we may not understand this, prayer releases God to work, move, and accomplish things in the lives of others. Scripture says that God is looking for those who will stand in the gap (Ezekiel 22:30-31). Prayer puts us in touch with what God is doing, and we are called to pray diligently for His will to be accomplished. It is a tremendous privilege that our loving heavenly Father has given to His children to be a part of His work.
4. Let's begin a topical study on prayer. If you have never done this before, rest assured it is not as daunting as it may seem. There is a list of verses that have to do with prayer. It is not exhaustive by any means, but it will help you glean much information. Prayerfully read each Scripture (in its context - verses before and after it) and record what they teach you about prayer. Be detailed and specific. If need be, you may need to look up word meanings or even cross references to help you better understand the meaning of a particular passage.
5. When you are done, take all your information and compile it into an outline. During your study you may see various topics that come to the surface (when to pray, how to pray, what to pray, etc.), similarities between verses, commands, or other details that are important. This is information that will help you form your outline. When forming your outline, make sure to include Scripture references! Give this thought and prayer and do your best. God will bless the effort you put forth!
 - a. II Chronicles 7:14
 - b. Psalm 34:15
 - c. Psalm 66:16-20
 - d. Proverbs 15:8, 29
 - e. Proverbs 28:9-13

f. Isaiah 59:1-2

g. Jeremiah 33:3

h. Matthew 6:5-13

i. Matthew 7:7-8

j. Luke 11:11-13

k. Luke 18:1

l. John 9:31

m. John 14:13-14

n. John 15:7-16

o. John 16:23-26

p. Romans 8:26-27

q. Ephesians 6:18-20

r. Philippians 4:6

s. I Thessalonians 5:16-18

t. I Timothy 2:1-2

u. II Timothy 3:1-7

v. Hebrews 4:16

w. James 1:5-7

x. James 4:1-3

y. James 5:16

z. I John 5:14-15

YOUR OUTLINE ON PRAYER

I Thessalonians

Lesson 6, Chapter 3