

Paul's Letters to the **Thessalonians**



Lesson 11-Setting Good Examples and Living the Faith **Focus:** 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18

- **To be growing in the faith and delivered from Evil people (v.1-5)**
 - (v.1,2) *The request of Paul was for the prayers of the believers in Thessalonica. Christian brothers and sisters need to pray for each other. Gospel ministers especially need prayers! Those who are on the frontlines of the battle between Christ and Satan, between good and evil, are the special targets of Satan. Satan endeavors to destroy, discourage, and to ruin anyone he can, but he especially aims for the destruction of God's faithful gospel workers because he knows well that they can do the most effective damage to his wicked kingdom! Paul was asking for prayers! He needed the word of God to go as freely as possible, and also to be delivered from the evil and faithless people who were laboring under Satan's influence to try and stop him and the progress of the gospel work!*
 - (v.3-5) Paul also reminded the believers in Thessalonica of the fact that God would be their protector and their keeper! The Lord of Heaven and Earth is the One who both could and would help to establish them strongly in the faith and to keep them there. **He is the One who can keep us from Evil and therefore we should pray, seek, and trust for such (See Matthew 6:9-13; John 15:4,5; Jude 1:24,25).** Paul was confident that the believers in Thessalonica were doing their part, and would do their part in this great work of sanctification (or of making holy). It was his prayer that God would keep these beloved ones in the faith, increasing their love, and a patient spirit which also looked forward with an earnest and eager desire to see the Lord come! We should all have such a faith in God! ***Our lives should be lived wholly in reference to the Second Coming of the Son of Man!*** This was a continuing theme throughout both of Paul's letters to the church in Thessalonica, and the very counsel applies directly to us as well!
 - (v.4) ***It is good to express confidence in others to be faithful and obedient to the Lord, even as Paul did with these believers. We must expect and look for better things in every person! Such a confidence and trust will inspire others to rise to the occasion and to meet the expectations and trust that are placed upon them! Distrust and censure can often produce the kind of bad results you might be expecting from someone. We should encourage those who've been walking faithfully to continue in the good way by expressing our confidence in them to continue being faithful!***
- **Following the right example and shunning the disorderly who walk in wickedness! (v.6-9)**
 - The old adage, "Choose your friends carefully" is quite an important one and it does hold true throughout the teaching of the Bible! Character is very important! The choice of friends and companions is extremely important too because we will be shaped by our association together. "Birds of a feather flock together," is also a true saying! That is,

birds with the same kind of qualities and colors always like to fly and go together. The Bible says, “With an angry man, do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul” (See Proverbs 22:24,25). We should not follow on with evil associates for they will corrupt good manners or our righteous habits. (1 Cor. 15:33,34; Prov. 1:10,15,16).

- Christians are to follow the most faithful and holy examples they can find. Especially that of Jesus Christ, and of any example the models after it. We should be diligent and faithful workers, even like Paul who labored night and day to work on the side and make some money for living, while also doing the gospel work among the new believers. He did not make his life a burden upon others, but rather, he labored to bless them. We need to be those who set a right example in Christ Jesus and who shun all forms of evil! (That was the godly example set by God’s servant Job too, see Job 1:1,8). This should be the kind of pattern we choose to follow in our own lives! Live faithfully for Christ Jesus!!
- **Dealing with the disorderly: Using redemptive punishment (v.10-18)**
 - (v.10-12) Laziness or idleness is sin! Making your life a burden upon others by refusing to labor is not loving your neighbor, but rather exploiting them!! We should follow the diligent course of the ant who works hard and learn from the lessons God has given us in nature (See Proverbs 6:6-11). The way to deal with the lazy was to **not support them!** They should be treated as is deserved. Love with teach them to work by “tuff love.” It will not cater to their wickedness or idleness. Teach them to fish, don’t just give them fish every day.
 - (v.13) **However, be careful to draw a line here! Do not be weary in well doing!!** Help those who truly need to be helped! That is love, and that is different! We should help the poor, the hurt, the sick, the downcast and those who are out on their luck! Help others! Don’t be weary in that! It is love.
 - (v.14,15) When discipline or punishment is necessary, then it should be used. Treat people with the kind of treatment that is necessary to bring reform to their life and character. But, do not consider them as an enemy. No. Work receptively. The aim of any form of punishment should be redemptive. Show love and desire to save!
 - (v.16-18) Paul then signs out with his signature. (Note: Some Bible’s note that this epistle was written from Athens. However, it is also argued very well, and highly likely that it was actually written from near by Corinth, in AD 51 where Paul’s first letter was written from).

Question (s) for the Heart:

Would you like to live by the pure principles of the faith of Jesus Christ? _____