

1 Thessalonians Chapter 3

****Before you start, please spend time in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you dig deeply in the passage. You **many not get some of the questions which is just fine**. Also, feel free to ask your own questions. Sometimes, we need to live with "I don't know" and move on. Being in a group of other believers can help the process. After the group study, find a trusted commentary and/or a trusted pastor (John MacArthur and Alistair Begg, etc) to listen to the sermons on the passage. However, do what you can first and trust the Lord to guide you in the process.*

Icebreaker: What took you a long time to learn to do well. Were you often discouraged? What kept you going or encouraged you to not quit or at least try again? (cooking, sport, music, etc.)

Questions: **Ob**= observation questions **Int**= interpretive questions **App**= application questions
(application questions can be very personal so please only share as you feel comfortable)

Note: Paul wrote Thessalonians just a few months after he had established the church there. Paul wrote from Corinth though he had been alone in Athens for a while when he sent Timothy. You can read Acts 17-18 for more information.

1. Ob. First: go through the whole chapter and circle the word "faith". Define FAITH.

2. v1 Ob Therefore... ok... we need to know what the "therefore" is there.. for... Because of 2:17-20 with emphasis on 19-20, what could Paul no longer bear... what is the "it"?

3. Int- Why would Paul be so concerned? What have the Thessalonians been going through? How would we describe this church? What does this tell us about Paul's pastoral/servant heart for these people?

4. App- It seems Paul is not following his own teaching... Phil 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing. When have there been times when you have been so concerned for someone (health, struggles, etc.) that you wanted to go be with them or have actually gone to be with them? Can we be concerned, ready to help, pray and trust that God is doing His work in our loved ones lives? Who do they belong to?

This article by Tim Challies changed so much for me... I am a worrier ☹. It really helped me see my worrying did not change anything but caring through trust and prayer ...did!! How could I care and not worry? challies.com/articles/not-worrying-not-caring/

5. V2 Ob- How does Paul describe Timothy?

6. We do not know exactly what Paul meant about Satan keeping Paul from going, but he did have Timothy .
Int Why do you think Paul sent Timothy? How does Paul describe Timothy and his ministry gifts? 2 Timothy 2:1-2, Philippians 2:19-23, 1 Corinthians 4:17, 16:10-11.

7. Ob- Define: establish:
Define: exhort:

8. Int- How do you think Timothy did this for the Thessalonians? Read Acts 14:21-22 and Ephesians 1:18-21 in how Paul modeled for Timothy how to encourage believers.

Read Psalm 145:13-20...perhaps he shared this with them. Or Isaiah 40:31 (can you think of other scripture in the OT) Psalms of Lament... Psalm 130, 6...

9. App- How are you strengthened in your faith? How can you encourage and strengthened others in their faith? When has someone done this for you ?

10. V3 Ob Why did Timothy need to go and encourage them? What do other translations use for the “moved”. (song.. He will Hold me Fast)

11. V4 Ob- Go back to 1:7- What had Paul said to them from the beginning? For Paul and the apostles, suffering is part of being a Christian. John 16:33 (what does “will” mean?)

Even in your worst suffering, even in your darkest valley, even in the most agonizing persecution, you can rejoice and be glad because God is with you, because God is accomplishing his purposes, because this light and momentary affliction—even if it leads all the way to death—is preparing you for an eternal weight of glory that is far beyond all comparison. And so expect to be persecuted; when it appears to have come, honestly evaluate your persecution; and if you are convinced this is, indeed, suffering for righteousness’ sake, then embrace your persecution as a means through which God is at work for the furthering of his kingdom, the good of his people, and the glory of his name. And rejoice that you have been counted worthy to suffer dishonor, or even death, for his sake. challies.com/articles/christian-you-can-embrace-persecution-when-it-comes/

12. Int- What afflictions might they have been going through- individually and as a church? “A healthy church will go through trials and tribulations” Beale Think of the culture and times- pagan families against the gentle believers Acts 16:19, Acts 19:21 41 and Jewish leaders against the Jewish Christians Acts 14:19, Acts 17:5, Acts 18:12,13. (loss of family, income, etc.)

13. When we think about persecution, we think of being jailed or even beatings and death. However, we too go through trials and tribulations. **John MacArthur** : “**Trials are anything that breaks tranquility (calmness/peace) or happiness. It can be disappointments, frustrations, misunderstandings, unfilled dreams, unmet expectations, losses, loneliness, fear, criticism, persecution and conflict-both internal and external.**”

So much to share here... but recommend: “mini-book Help! I can’t Handle all These Trials by Joel James (see Deanne) Benefitting from Life’s Trials by John Macarthur –absolutely fabulous- a few will be in the church library, challies.com/articles/when-you-long-to-know-the-why-behind-your-sorrow; Seasons of Sorrow- Tim Challies –library.

14- App- How can we prepare for suffering? Romans 5:3-4 ³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

The New Testament highlights prayer as the pervasive accompaniment of every battle. “Take . . . the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, *praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication*” (Ephesians 6:17–18) John Piper We know that Christ is making intercession for us 1 John 2:1-2. **“No True believer will fail” John MacArthur 1 John 5:4-5**

15. App- What trials have you gone through or are going through right now? Can you see that God is working in your life? How can we pray for you? (personal so share only if you feel comfortable).

16. V5 Ob- What is Paul’s greatest concern? 2 Corinthians 4:7-14

17. Int- What does Matthew 13:18-23 help us understand about those hearing the gospel? 1 Peter 5:8 What is Satan doing to believers?

God is not the author of evil, but He is sovereign over evil. Therefore, we can have this hope: there will be a day when God will bring all evil to an end. Meanwhile, He determines to leave things as they are in order that through our trials we might cling to the Suffering Servant as our Savior. Do not let your disappointments over life in a fallen world persuade you that God is not there or He does not care. **Rather, let them drive you again and again to your Savior, who promises one day to make an end of all that is wrong and stretches before you an eternity in which all is right.**

Alistair Begg

gotquestions.org/God-allow-Satan-attack.html

Promise and Hope: Jude 24 Satan was defeated –Colossians 2:13-15 Satan is being defeated – Ephesians 6:10-20 Satan will be defeated- Revelation 16:20. (Song- A Might Fortress is our God)

18. App- Are you sometimes discouraged that your labour (family, job, friendships, church work, devotions/Bible study, prayer life) is in vain? We may not always see the fruit of our labour but know 1 Corinthians 15:58 .

19. V 6 Ob/int “But”... Paul’s concern changes? Why? What is the good news Timothy brings?

a.

b.

c.

20. App Who in your life do you long to see and thank them for encouraging you along your spiritual journey?

21. V 7-8 Ob/ int What trials have Paul, Silas and Timothy had *2 Corinthians 11:25, Acts 17 ..*

22. App –How can we share what God is doing in our lives –both the ups and the downs with fellow believers? Romans 12:15 How important is it to be in a body of believers to be able to do this?

⁷ *So we have been greatly encouraged in the midst of our troubles and suffering, dear brothers and sisters, because you have remained strong in your faith.* ⁸ *It gives us new life to know that you are standing firm in the Lord. NLT*

23. V 9 Ob Who is Paul thanking for the Thessalonians standing fast? Phil 2:13 2 Thess.2:13

24. Int What does “standing fast” look like? How do we know we are standing fast? What would NOT standing fast look like?

25. V 10 Ob What two things are Paul specifically praying for?

26. Int- What do you think “lacking in faith” might mean? (Chapters 4 and 5 is Paul’s teaching to them)

27. App – What do you think is lacking in your faith? (this is a real hard question, isn’t it... something to ponder and pray earnestly about 2 Peter 1:3-11) How can others help you in maturing and growing in your walk with the Lord? What can you do for your family and other believers to help them mature in their faith?

“A stable Christian is a growing Christian. And such growth in grace is always personal: “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” This is not the knowledge of books and facts, but knowing a person. Christian stability and maturity happen not merely by learning doctrines, but by knowing a real person in and through doctrines — growing into Christ (Ephesians 4:15–16) and holding fast to him (Colossians 2:19).” desiringgod.org/articles/the-main-ingredient-in-personal-growth

28. V 11-13 Paul's second prayer a prayer of petition Paul's concern was for their faith, not their comfort or safety, their love for each other and for obedience. John MacArthur

Ob What three things is Paul asking God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ to do ?

a.

b. (what is the verb here?)

Int- How can we show love for each other? How does that increase?

c.

App How can you personally and our church love those outside the church?

Beale- Loving each other in the church is a witness to the outside world. John 17:23. It is evidence of God in their lives. It is the most used “one another” in the NT. We are to also love those outside the church Galatians 6:10, Titus 3:2-8.. What happens if we don't grow in love?

“Truth is hard if not softened by love, and love is soft if not strengthened by the truth” John Stott

29. V 13 Ob Why is Paul praying this? Who will establish this? Review “establish”

30. Int What is the evidence of our hearts/faith? 1 Peter 4:16-17 What has Paul said to them in these three chapters?

31. Int How are we to be blameless before God? Romans 5:8-11

“ The focus here is not on what God does to His people at the end of history but on God's work in the lives of His people **until** they share Christ's glory at His final coming.” GK Beale

Colossians 1: ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

32. Ob When will the evidence of our hearts be judged? (Theologians are not clear who the saints are... angels, Christians already in heaven or Christians at the end of the age)