

The Importance of Follow-up

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

Introduction

I The Concern of Paul

- A. He stayed in Athens - 1 Thess 2:17
- B. He sent Timothy to find out about their faith - 1 Cor 4:14-17
 - 1. Timothy's identity:
 - a. He was their **brother**
 - b. He was God's **fellow** worker
 - 2. Timothy's activity:
 - a. Spreading the gospel - 2 Thess 3:1
 - b. **Strengthening** them in their faith - Acts 14:22; 18:23
 - c. **Encouraging** them in their faith - Eph 6:22; Col 4:8
 - d. Preventing them from being unsettled by their trials:
 - 1. They were **destined** for them - 2 Tim 3:12
 - 2. They were **warned** about them - Jn 16:1-4, 33
- C. He was afraid:
 - 1. That the tempter might have **tempted** them - Mt 13:1-23
 - 2. That their efforts might have been **useless** - 1 Thess 2:1

II The Report to Paul

- A. Timothy brought good news about: - Prov 25:25
 - 1. Their **faith** and love - Col 1:3-6; 1 Jn 3:23
 - 2. Their pleasant memories of Paul - 1 Cor 11:2
 - 3. Their reciprocated **longing** for one another - 2 Cor 7:5-7
- B. The impact of the report on Paul and his friends:
 - 1. They were **encouraged** because of their faith
 - a. Despite their distress and persecution - 2 Cor 7:2-4
 - 2. They really lived
 - a. Since they were **standing** firm in the Lord - Phil 1:27
 - 3. They were **thankful** to God
 - a. For the joy they had because of them - 1 Ths 2:19-20
 - 4. They **prayed** most earnestly that they might:
 - a. See them again
 - b. **Supply** what was lacking in their faith - 1 Pt 5:10

III The Blessing of Paul

- A. May our God **clear** the way for us to come to you - Ecl 7:13
- B. May the Lord make our **love** increase and overflow:
 - 1. For each other and everyone else - Jn 13:34-35
 - 2. Just as Paul's did for them
- C. May he **strengthen** your hearts:
 - 1. So that you will be **blameless** - Phil 2:12-16
 - 2. So that you will be **holy** - 1 Thess 5:23-24
 - a. In the presence of our God and Father
 - b. When our Lord Jesus **comes** with all his holy ones

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take some time this week to consider the following:

- 1. Who followed up on you after you came to know Christ?
- 2. When you think about raising physical children, what aspect do you consider to be most challenging? Most rewarding?
- 3. What steps did Paul take to ensure the continued spiritual development of the believers in Thessalonica?
- 4. Paul didn't candy-coat what it meant to be a believer. What have you found to be most difficult when it comes to following Christ? How might have Paul's advice helped them?
- 5. Faith and love are often connected in scripture (verse 6). Define each briefly and explain the interrelationship between them as it relates to spiritual development and Christian maturity. How would you rate your maturity level in these two areas (1-10)?
- 6. In verse 10 Paul says he prays night and day to be able to supply what is lacking in the Thessalonians faith. Who is the person you are actively and intentionally helping to grow spiritually?
- 7. Ask the Lord to give you the desire and obedience to become a spiritual parent; to help someone grow in their faith/love, to stand with them through life's challenges, to help supply what is lacking in their walk with the Lord, and to prepare them for the eventuality of Christ's soon return.

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

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