



Women's R&R Bible Study 2024-2025

"YOUR WORDS WERE FOUND, AND I ATE THEM, AND YOUR WORD WAS TO ME THE JOY AND REJOICING OF MY HEART."

JEREMIAH 15:16

LIVING IN HOPE

LESSON 3

This week we will continue looking at Paul's pastor's heart for the Thessalonians. We also meet a new character by the name of Timothy, who happens to be one of my favorite people in the Bible. I believe that Timothy was one of Paul's favorite people too. That makes me want to get to know him better. Remember to pray before you begin, asking the Holy Spirit to give you understanding of His Word and wisdom to know how to apply it to your life. In Psalm 119:129-130, David said, "Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore, my soul keeps them. The entrance of Your word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple." I am very simple ... I need help!

Let's begin today by reading chapter 3. When this book was written, there were no chapter or verse breaks. This seems to be a strange place to break because it begins with the word "therefore," which ties the two thoughts together. To see what the "therefore" is "there for," we will begin by reading chapter 2:17-20.

Memory Verse of the Week: "And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13. Observe and list the facts, repeated words, and thoughts. How are these sections ("therefore") tied together?

2. According to this chapter, what was Paul's purpose in sending Timothy to the Thessalonians? Give verses to support your answer.
3. What does Paul say to the Thessalonians about trials?
4. What does Paul say about their faith?
5. In this chapter, do you find any:
 - a. Encouragement?
 - b. Challenges?
 - c. Warnings?

Remember from the introduction that Paul went from Philippi to Thessalonica, and then on to Berea. Some jealous Jews followed them to Berea and caused a stir. For this reason, Paul was sent to Athens, leaving Timothy and Silas behind (Acts 17:14-15). While Paul was alone in Athens, he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to be with the church. Sending Timothy away must have been a sacrifice for Paul, knowing that he would have to face ministry in Athens all alone. The city of Athens was full of paganism and idolatry. An ancient Greek writer once said, "In Athens it is easier to find a god than a man." The fact that he even sent Timothy is another proof of how much Paul loved the Thessalonians. He was willing to face the fear of the unknown as he walked alone through the streets of Athens.

The word "**left**" in verse one literally means "**abandonment**" and implies a feeling of desolation.

6. Paul says he "couldn't endure" being away from the Thessalonians. What other kinds of "things" had Paul endured in his life? Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-33 for your answer.

7. What does this tell you about Paul's love for people?
8. How do you feel about people? Would you rather avoid them, or do you love them as Paul did?
9. Who is this man, Timothy? Read the following Scriptures and list the facts you find about him. What facts are of most interest to you?
Acts 16:1-3, 2 Timothy 1:5, 2 Timothy 3:15, Philippians 2:19-24, 1 Timothy 1:2, 18, and 1 Corinthians 4:17.

Timothy was not Paul's birth son, but he considered him his "son in the faith." He was extremely close to him, being a faithful and devoted minister and friend. No wonder Paul loved him so much. I like what Warren Wiersbe says about young Timothy ...

- a. He was a believer ("our brother")
 - b. He was a minister (Greek word for servant)
 - c. He was a good team member ("fellow worker")
 - d. He was like-minded with Paul (Philippians 2:20)
10. According to 2 Timothy 1:5, who passed on a spiritual legacy to Timothy?
 11. Why do you think the Holy Spirit led Paul to mention these two ladies?

We don't know anything else about these two women except for the fact that they passed their faith down to their children. They must have been great examples and lived out their beliefs because Paul makes sure he names them specifically. They would go down in history as a mom and a grandmother that obeyed God's Word and trained their kids in the ways of the Lord. Paul doesn't mention any other "good" thing they did for their

kids, like how well they were provided for, or how many opportunities they were offered. They were honored simply because they loved God and taught their children to love Him too.

12. What example can you take from these ladies? If God was to pick out something that has characterized your life, would it be how well you've trained your children to love Him? What kind of spiritual legacy are you leaving?

13. Do you have any "sons or daughters" in the faith? Have you come alongside any younger Christians to show them the ropes, so to speak? Are you willing to pour your life into theirs, like Paul did?

Timothy was sent to "establish and encourage" them. The word "**establish**" means to strengthen, support, or make firm. He was to comfort, strengthen, and encourage the believers in their faith. This word "**encourage**" means to "call to the side of." It gives us the picture of one person standing alongside someone else to put courage into them. He was there to help them face the battles that were ahead. He was not there merely to "check" on them or inspect the church, but to offer help.

14. How can we help to "establish and encourage" those in our household?

15. Why are trials necessary in the lives of believers? Read the following Scriptures. What do they say about the purpose of trials?

- a. Psalm 119:67, 71, 75:
- b. Romans 5:3-5:
- c. 1 Peter 1:6-9:
- d. James 1:2-4:
- e. Psalm 66:10-12:
- f. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18:

- 16.** Which one of these Scriptures encourages you the most today? Why?
- 17.** Read Matthew 5:11-12. What does Jesus promise us?
- 18.** What did Jesus say in John 16:33? Also read 1 John 5:4-5. How do these verses encourage you and give you hope?
- 19.** Are you going through a trial right now? What's happening to your faith? Is it wavering, or is the trial producing patience, as well as strengthening your faith?
- 20.** Let's read one more Scripture on trials, 1 Peter 4:12-19. What does Peter say about suffering for the sake of Christ? What does verse 19 tell us to do?

We know that the "tempter" in 1 Thess. 3:5 is the devil, or satan. Satan is the Hebrew word meaning accuser or adversary. He is definitely a real being. Paul does not speak figuratively of him. He is also referred to as the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4), prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), ruler of darkness (Ephesians 6:12), murderer (John 8:44), serpent (Genesis 3:4), and the wicked one (Matthew 13:19).

- 21.** According to 1 Peter 5:8 and Revelation 12:9, what is his purpose?

- 22.** Read Matthew 4:1-11. Jesus was also tempted by satan. How did He handle it?

Although the devil has a lot of power, it's nothing compared to the power we have through Jesus Christ. **1 John 4:4** says, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." Jesus has overcome the world, and that makes us "overcomers" because we believe in Him (1 John 5:4-5). We are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:35-37). We don't have to be afraid of the enemy. **2 Corinthians 2:11** tells us not to be ignorant of his tactics so we won't be caught by surprise. We can't underestimate him, nor should we attribute more power to him than he has. He is the enemy that will be thrown into the lake of fire in the end, while we live for eternity with the Lord in glory (Revelation 20:10). We don't need to be afraid. Like Paul said to the Thessalonians, "Don't be shaken!" And to be "forewarned" is to be "forearmed"!

The wording Paul uses in 1 Thess. 3:5 implies that he believed the devil had been tempting the Thessalonians, but he didn't believe they had fallen. He wasn't insinuating that he had labored or toiled in vain.

- 23.** In verses 6-13, what report did Timothy bring back?

- 24.** How does hearing about the faith of others encourage you? Why, then, is it so important for us to share with others what God is doing in our lives?

Paul said that Timothy brought "good news." This is the only place in the New Testament where this phrase is used for anything other than the Gospel. Masson says, "Paul never speaks of faith without thinking of Christ; thus, the good news of the faith and love of the converts is not unlike the good news of Christ."

- 25.** What did Paul say about his own situation at the time of his writing?

- 26.** What was Paul's strong exhortation to them in verse 8? Explain what he meant in your own words.

Paul felt that he had a lot at stake in them. Their stand was a living testimony for Christ. Verse 8 is translated by Findlay, "You must show that my misgivings were needless; you will go on to justify my confidence." Paul needed this encouragement. In a sense, his peace of mind depended on their steadfastness. He was in Athens alone and had been facing many difficulties as he preached the Gospel. Remember that he had been put in jail in Philippi and forced to leave Thessalonica. The jealous Thessalonian Jews had forced him out of Berea also. Things weren't going that great in Athens. Charles Erdman calls it his "Corinthian crisis." Paul describes his situation using the word "affliction" which means "choking," "pressing care," and "distress," or a "crushing kind of trouble." The news of their faith increased Paul's strength to continue his battle. He says, "Now we live." Paul was contrasting his feelings of apprehension with the comfort he now felt by Timothy's good news.

Paul is a great example of an evangelist. He doesn't just come in, preach, and leave. He carries the believers around with him in his heart, praying for them, longing for them, encouraging them. He opens his heart wide to the people he ministers to.

Paul prays that God would "perfect" what was lacking in their faith. This word doesn't mean sinless or flawless. W. E. Vine says it means "to supply what is necessary," or to "fit a thing for its full and proper use, supplying what is needed." This most likely refers to doctrine, rather than their confidence in God. Paul wanted them to be equipped with everything they needed.

- 27.** Do you pray consistently for the people you minister to? Do you allow yourself to become vulnerable enough to fully open your heart to them?
- 28.** Are you "standing fast in the Lord"? How does your steadfastness affect those around you? Is anyone counting on you as an example? (Husband, kids, neighbors, co-workers, etc.)

Paul wants his friends to “agape” others. This is the type of love that God has for the world, or His attitude toward the human race (John 3:16). It was an exercise of divine will and deliberate choice. We are called to show this love to others. God’s agape love is not an impulse based upon our feelings, but a choice. It is how we choose to respond and behave toward others. It is not dependent on how others love us. It is a kind of love that God pours in our hearts for others. Paul not only wanted the Thessalonians to love each other, but those who were persecuting them as well. Only the Lord can do that through us.

29. What do you think it means for our hearts to be “blameless in holiness”?

As our love for others grows, our hearts are established “blameless in holiness.” By definition, our “holiness” is our state of separation from evil and our being separated unto God. Moral purity should be a result of this state of our heart. Erdman says, “One who loves cannot fail to be holy, for love is the fulfilling of the law.” The final test of this will be at the coming of Jesus Christ. We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, where we will give account for our actions (1 Corinthians 4:1-5, 2 Corinthians 5:10). “Blameless” means a whole-hearted, unmixed devotion to loving God and doing His will in all things. Although this is Paul’s prayer, and our goal, we will never attain perfection until we are with Christ. But it is our pursuit.

30. What is the most significant spiritual truth you learned from this chapter? Did it instill any HOPE in your heart?