

MEMORY VERSE

So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them.

I Thessalonians 3:1-3

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- **Love**
"I show sacrificial and unconditional love for others."
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

Monday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to help you understand His Word as you study this passage.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:10. Reread 2:17-20. Read Acts 17:1-15.

What events caused Paul, Timothy and Silas to leave Thessalonica?

When the apostles left Thessalonica, where did they go?

In verse 17, Paul uses the phrase "torn away" to describe how they left the Thessalonians. The Greek verb he used was *aporphanisthentes* which literally meant "to be orphaned" and is used only here in the entire New Testament. Paul is expressing intense feelings of sadness at his "spiritual family" being torn apart.

Why did Paul long to return to the Thessalonians?

What hindered the apostles from returning to Thessalonica?

What does Paul describe as being the greatest joy and blessing he could possibly receive at the judgment seat of Christ?

Paul demonstrates his affection and concern as a "spiritual father" to the Thessalonians. To whom would you consider yourself to be a "spiritual parent"? How has this person been a source of joy and hope for you?

What are you concerned about regarding this person? Close your time by thanking God for allowing you to invest in the life of another person for His glory. Bring to God your concerns and ask Him to help you trust in His care.

Tuesday

Take a few moments to write down any task or circumstance that could distract you during your time studying God's word. Ask God to help you trust Him with tasks that need to get done and situations that concern you.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:10. Reread 3:1-2.

Paul sent Timothy back to the Thessalonians. How does he describe Timothy to them?

For what purpose has Paul sent Timothy to them?

The Greek words used for "strengthen" and "encourage" are used elsewhere in chapters 2&3. Look up these other verses and jot down a few notes regarding how the believers were to be strengthened and by what they were to be encouraged.

Strengthen=*stērizai* (1 Thess. 3:13)

Encourage=*parakalesai* (1 Thess. 2:12)

Paul was concerned for the new believers in Thessalonica that their faith was not grounded enough to withstand the temptations and difficulties they would face. He sent Timothy back to help them grow stronger roots of faith that could withstand any storm. Identify one or two people whom God has placed in your life to help grow deep roots of faith.

How are you strengthening and encouraging them in their faith?

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to deepen your faith and to allow you to help strengthen and encourage others in their faith. Pray specifically for the one or two people whom God has invited you to invest in.

Wednesday

What trial have you undergone that has shaken your faith?

How was your faith shaken?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:10. Reread 3:2-4.

Paul uses the Greek word *sainesthai*, translated as unsettled in verse 3. This Greek word gives the word picture of a dog wagging its tail back and forth. This word was a metaphor of someone whose faith wavers back and forth due to outside circumstances.

Read the account of Paul's call to ministry following his conversion in Acts 9:15, 16. What does God promise to Paul as part of his ministry?

Read the following passages in which Paul spoke about enduring hardships to the church at Corinth. Note next to each reference the specific teaching on trials in that passage:

2 Corinthians 4:8-15:

2 Corinthians 6:1-10:

2 Corinthians 11:23-30:

2 Corinthians 12:7-10:

What teaching of Paul to the church at Corinth connects to the area of your faith that was shaken in the face of trials?

End your time by praying that God would help you grow deep roots to help you stand unmoved in the face of trials.

Thursday

What are several things that are concerning you today? Spend a few moments praying for these and ask God to help you focus over the next moments of studying His Word.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20. Reread 3:5

Who is the tempter?

How would the apostle's efforts have been made useless?

Read these passages that also make reference to temptation.

Matthew 4:1-10 – What purpose did the tempter have in his interaction with Jesus?

James 1:13-15 – What results are promised from temptation?

Satan desires to uproot lives and persuade us that following God should not be our priority. Paul was fearful that the young Thessalonian believers had not yet been rooted deep enough in their faith to withstand the assault of the tempter, Satan.

Read Psalm 1:1-4. What allows one to be deeply rooted like a tree planted by streams of water?

Use this Psalm as a guide for prayer.

Verse 1: Ask God to search your heart and show you any ways that you have walked in the counsel of the wicked, acted as a sinner, or thought/spoken in the way of a mocker. Confess this to God and ask Him to renew your heart and help you change.

Verse 2: Reflect on this statement. Are the ways of God your delight? Is His Word something that you continually reflect on and live your life by? Ask God to help you grow in these ways.

Close by praying verse 3, asking God to root you deeply as a tree planted by a stream of water.

Friday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to give you insight into His Word today.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:10. Reread 3:6-10.

Paul was fearful that those who opposed him would persuade the young believers that the apostles were manipulating them and had deceived them. What does Timothy report are the opinions of the believers regarding the apostles?

What good news did Timothy report regarding the Thessalonians?

What deeply encouraged Paul?

Whom do the apostles thank for the good news of the Thessalonians' firm faith?

Paul immediately gave all credit for the Thessalonians' faith to God. He was thankful that God had allowed them to preach the Word and that God had preserved the Thessalonian's faith in the absence of the apostles. He knew that it wasn't to his credit or even the Thessalonians that their faith was firm.

What does verse 10 tell us is Paul's practice regarding the Thessalonians?

What was lacking in their faith?

Spend a few moments reflecting on areas in your life in which you are consistently and joyfully following God and building your faith. Are you taking credit or giving credit to others for this? Spend a few moments thanking God for mercifully working in you and producing good things in you.

For whose faith in your life are you most concerned? Close your time in prayer, earnestly praying for this person.