

## MEMORY VERSE

*May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His holy ones.*

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

## 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**

**"I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives and in the world.**

- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

### Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

## Monday

Begin your time in prayer. Bring before God any concerns you may have.

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 three times.

Using the passage below, mark any key words/ideas, phrases or words that don't make sense to you, and repeated words.

Now may our God and Father Himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His holy ones. (1 Thessalonians 3:11-13)

Paul carefully chose each word that he wrote in his letters to the churches. He instructed and built believers up in their faith through the words he used. In this passage he repeatedly mentions the names God, Father, Lord, and Jesus. Read the following definitions to gain more insight into what these names refer to:

God: (Greek=Theos) refers to the Godhead or trinity.

God the Father, the first person in the trinity

Christ, the second person of the trinity

Holy Spirit, the third person in the trinity

Father: (Greek=pater) God is called the Father...

of the stars, the heavenly luminaries, because He is their creator, upholder, ruler

of all rational and intelligent beings, whether angels or men, because He is their creator, preserver, guardian and protector

of spiritual beings and of all men

of Christians, as those who through Christ have been exalted to a specially close and intimate relationship with God, and who no longer dread him as a stern judge of sinners, but revere Him as their reconciled and loving Father

the Father of Jesus Christ, as one whom God has united to Himself in the closest bond of love and intimacy, made acquainted with His purposes, appointed to explain and carry out among men the plan of salvation, and made to share also in His own divine nature

Lord: (Greek=Kurios) he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding, master

This title is given to Jesus, the Messiah.

Jesus: (Greek=Iesous) the Son of God, the Savior of mankind, God incarnate

*\*\*taken from Interlinear Study Notes for 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 at:*

<http://www.searchgodsword.org>

In the context of this passage, what was significant about Paul using these four different names for the Godhead? What truths did it teach the Thessalonian believers about how God related to them in their current circumstances?

Read through the above definitions again. What truth about God, related through these names, encourages or convicts you?

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to give you a fuller understanding of the breadth of who He is and His power.

## Tuesday

Begin your time in prayer, expressing your desire to hear God's voice through His Word today.

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13.

With what request does Paul begin this prayer?

In whom does Paul trust to "clear the way"?

We looked yesterday at several names of God and how those names communicated the power and care with which God interacts with creation. Paul uses these multiple names of God to acknowledge the strength of the one to whom He is praying *before* making his request known.

The Greek word, kateuthuno is used for the phrase "clear the way." This word can also be translated as to make straight, guide or direct, to remove hindrances.

In what circumstance or situation do you need God to "clear the way"?

Spend some time in prayer, using Paul's prayer as a guide. First acknowledge and affirm the truth that God is in control and lovingly cares for the situation you are bringing before Him. Ask God to deepen your belief in His control and care. Express your desire for His intervention in your particular situation.

### **Wednesday**

Think through your day yesterday. To whom did you express love or care?

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13. Reread verse 12.

Who is the one that can cause the Thessalonians love to abound?

What two synonyms does Paul use to refer to the love that the Lord can instigate in the Thessalonian believers?

Who should be the object of this love?

Whose love was a model to them for how they should love?

The words increase and overflow refer to a super-abundance of love. When have you seen God work through you to cause an increasing and overflowing love?

In what current relationships or situation are you in need of an increase in love?

Close your time by praying that God would work in you to develop an authentically increasing love in the relationship you mentioned above.

### **Thursday**

Begin your time this morning by reflecting on your day yesterday. Are there any areas of sin that you need to acknowledge to God?

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13.

In the beginning of verse 13, what does Paul pray for the believers?

Notice that Paul does not pray that they will be sinless, but instead he prays that they would be blameless and holy. Read the following passages that also speak to the importance of the pursuit of a blameless and holy life. Next to each passage, jot down a few notes regarding the specific instruction given.

1 Corinthians 1:8-

2 Corinthians 11:2-

Ephesians 5:25-27-

Jude 24-

What does it mean to be blameless? Holy?

Close your time in prayer and silence. Ask God to search your heart and show you any ways in which you have sinned and failed to pursue reconciliation either with God or others. Sit in silence and listen for any ways that God might show you in which you are not blameless before Him. Acknowledge these to Him and ask for strength to pursue what He asks of you.

### **Friday**

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

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13.

In whose presence and when does Paul say we will be weighed according to our blamelessness?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. Who are the holy ones that will come with Jesus when He returns?

We are to be concerned not with other's perception of our blamelessness, but with God's. It is at the final judgment (called the Great White Throne Judgment) spoken of in Revelation 20:11-12, that unbelievers will be judged. Unbelievers will be judged according to their eternal destination. Believers, however, do not need to fear condemnation regarding their sin because Christ's death on the cross and their acceptance of this through faith has ensured the believer of an eternity in heaven.

The judgment for the believer will be in regard to how they have pursued a blameless and holy life. We will be judged according to our action or inaction in obedience to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). At this judgment—called the Bema seat judgment, which is separate from the one spoken of in Revelation 20—all of our actions, motives and thoughts as followers of Jesus will be laid bare before the Lord and scripture indicates we will receive degrees of reward for our obedience to God (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

Entering the presence of Jesus and having all of our life accounted for should cause us to act differently. We are pursuing transformation and holiness so that we can stand before Him as one who is blameless.

How have you concerned yourself more with other people's perception of your spiritual blamelessness than with God's?

How can you remind yourself on an ongoing basis that it is God's approval for which you strive?

Close your time in prayer. Thank God you do not need to fear condemnation because of what Christ has done (Romans 8:1). Ask God to give you a heightened awareness of the reality that you will stand before Him one day and give an account for your life as His follower—not for entrance into heaven, but to receive Jesus' approval and reward. Ask God to help this truth motivate you in your pursuit of transformation, not out of guilt, but love for God and a desire to be more like Him.