

Study Notes for 1 Thessalonians 3

Read the entire chapter to get a sense of the Apostle's theme for this chapter.

- What phrase occurs in 3:1 and again in 3:5 that indicates Paul's tremendous concern for the Thessalonians?
- Why do you suppose the Apostle felt that strongly?
- Paul spoke of Timothy as "**God's coworker.**" By using "worker," Paul chose a word that the Greeks used to denote the service of a table waiter. The word eventually came to signify humble service of any kind. The early Christians adopted this word to give expression to the service that we are all to render habitually to both God and man. (It's where we get our word "**deacon.**" Why is it important for all of us to think of ourselves as servants?
- In **verse 2** what two things did he send Timothy to do among the believers in Thessalonica?
- Read **verse 2** in some different translations and see what other words are used to describe what Paul wanted Timothy to accomplish.
- **Establish** (3:2). Carries the idea of making firm or solid. (Pastor Paul used the illustration of setting a fence post in concrete.) How does this word apply to our faith?
- **Exhort** (3:2). This word portrays one person standing alongside another in order to offer courage in hard times. Why is encouraging someone in their faith important?
- Read the first part of **verse 3**. What does it mean to be "moved by afflictions?" (Read Psalm 55:22)
- What does Paul mean in **verse 3** when he says Christians were "destined" for afflictions?
- Does that mean God specifically sends trials that come our way, or that such things are inevitable given the fallen state of the world?
- Re-read **verse 4**. Why do you think it's important to tell new believers that suffering and persecution will be the result of following Jesus?
- Why is **verse 5** important information to know for every person who shares their faith with others?
- How does **the Parable of the Sower** underscore what Paul is saying in **verse 5**?
- In **verses 6-8** what was Paul's reaction to the good news that Timothy brought?
- What do Paul's words in those verses tell you about him as a man and an apostle?
- In **verse 10** the Apostle speaks of coming back to Thessalonica to "supply what is lacking" in their faith. What kinds of things are usually lacking in the faith of a brand new believer?
- In **verses 11 and 12** the Apostle prays for the believers that they may increase and abound in love. Of all the things he could pray about, why do you think he picks that request?
- What other passages of Scripture in the New Testament can you think of that speaks of the importance of love in the life of a believer?
- How does being people of agape love set us apart from the people of the world?
- Read **Matthew 22:35-40**. How does this passage speak of the preeminence of love?