

BOOK OF 2 THESSALONIANS
THE LORD DIRECT YOUR HEARTS INTO THE LOVE OF GOD
2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-5

INTRODUCTION

In our final message on the Book of 1 Thessalonians we looked at the importance of praying for those that minister on our behalf!

- A. Why Pray For Them?**
- 1. Because They Long For Your Prayers!**
 - 2. Because They Labor For Your Profit!**
 - 3. Because They Live As Your Pattern!**
 - 4. Because They Lookout For Your Protection!**
- B. How To Pray For Them.**
- 1. Pray For Their Work! (2 Thessalonians 3:1)**
 - 2. Pray For Their Safety! (2 Thessalonians 3:2)**

In talking about *unreasonable and wicked men* who have no faith, Paul is quick to remind this Church and us in *verse 3* that *the Lord is faithful*...which means the Lord is *trustworthy*...*He is worthy of our trust!* **And he mentions two things here with regard to this in verse 3:**

- A. The Lord is faithful to stablish us!**
“shall” = “it will happen” (It is an assurance!)

“stablish” = “to set fast, that is, (literally) to turn resolutely in a certain direction, or (figuratively) to confirm.”

We need to be *set fast* in our **faith** and *set fast* in our **direction!**

We’ll see that *the direction that we need to be turned to resolutely* is **to the LORD**...in every thing!

- B. The Lord is faithful to keep us from evil!**
“keep” = “to watch, that is, be on guard (literally or figuratively); by implication to preserve.”

Again, as I read this, my mind goes back to **Romans 8:35-39!**

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Then, Paul directs them in *verse 4* to the ONE Who is *faithful* and Who will *stablish* them and *keep* them! Paul’s confidence is not in THEM, but in HIM!

Paul’s confidence was in the Lord *touching* the Thessalonian believers! The Lord had *touched* them **in the past to do** the things that Paul commanded! And Paul knew the Lord would continue to *touch* them **to do** those things that Paul commanded!

And now we get to where I want to preach tonight! **(Vs 5)**

In just a few weeks we’ll be celebrating the LORD’s birth and then the week after that we’ll usher in a New Year! This year flew by didn’t it?

As we begin to look forward to another year we tend to look back and evaluate the previous one. Hopefully when we do that, there are some positive things that were accomplished in our Spiritual walk and life! However, there are usually some things that we did not get accomplished or areas where we failed the LORD in our Spiritual walk and life!

But we are not to allow either our successes or our failures to cloud our vision of the future! We can’t rest on the laurels of our successes! And as far as our failures go, we cannot change our past!

But by the grace of God, we can make the most of the future! So remember those things which will help you forward, but forget those things which will only hold you back!
Philippians 3:13-14-"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Because our hope is in **Christ...we can find forgiveness for our failures by God’s grace...we can let go of them by God’s grace...and then we can look forward to what the LORD will help us become in our lives both today and tomorrow and on into the future until we go home to be with Him.**

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And this is ALL by His grace and working in our hearts and lives!

Rather than dwell on our past—either successes or failures, we need to grow in the knowledge of God by concentrating on our relationship with Him now! As we develop our relationship with God, the successes in our walk will become more numerous and the failures in our walk will become less so!

Sometimes we, as Christians, stray from God in our hearts...we can grow weary in well doing and consequently, we can grow slack in our commitment.

It is during these times that our lives seem to lack direction! We wake up one day to find that we are heading in a direction contrary to God's direction and will for our lives.

Paul prayed for the Thessalonians here in **verse 5**.
The word "**direct**" is translated from a word that means "**to straighten fully.**"

Paul prayed that the Thessalonians would get focused on the love of God and on patiently waiting on the return of Christ for His own!

Let's look at this more closely!

WE NEED TO FOCUS ON OUR PASSION (or LOVE) FOR THE LORD! (3:5a)

The Psalmist David said these words in *Psalm 63:1-2*-"*O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*"

There is no doubt that David had a great passion or love for the LORD!
The question is, how is our passion for the Lord?

I. WE SHOULD LOVE GOD ABOVE ALL ELSE!

Deuteronomy 6:5 tells us, "*And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*"

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The Jews refer to the verses of *Deuteronomy 6:4-6*, as the *Shema*. To the Jews, it is the most important text in the Torah!

According to the Lord Jesus, to love the LORD our God is the great and first commandment! (***Matthew 22:36-38***)

To love the LORD with all one's heart is the very soul and essence of Christianity!

If we love God as we should, we will willingly suffer for Him if need be and for His cause and patiently wait for His Son from heaven!

Paul wanted Christ to direct the hearts of the believers at Thessalonica into the **fullness** of the love of God, and thereby fill their hearts with patience, rather than anxiety concerning the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ

WE SHOULD LOVE GOD ABOVE ALL ELSE!

II. WE SOMETIMES FAIL TO LOVE GOD AS WE SHOULD!

We become as The Church of Ephesus to whom the Lord said in *Revelation 2:4*-"*...I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*"

What causes us to fail in our love for God?

Well I know three things that can happen:

A. The World Can Steal Our Affection!

Jesus said in *Matthew 6:24*-"*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one; and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*"

Jesus in the parable of the sower in *Luke 8:14* describes that the seed "*...which fell among thorns are they, which have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.*"

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It is sad to say, but many in Churches today fall into this category! There is a falling away from the love they should have for the LORD because they love the world!

We have too many believers like "Demas"!
2 Timothy 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world..."

1 John 2:15-17 15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

The World Can Steal Our Affection...

B. The Devil Can Undermine Our Love!

1 Peter 5:8 warns us, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Satan knows he can't have our soul once we belong to the LORD, but if he can get us to fail in our love for the LORD, he still has accomplished one of his purposes.

Satan does all he can to cause our love for the LORD to wax cold! He sends what I call his deadly D's — (i.e. His wiles!) **death, disappointments, distress, depression, and difficulties** to our lives to test our love for God.

Ephesians 4:27 tells us, "*Neither give place to the devil.*" (i.e. Never give Satan a foothold in your life!)

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We MUST do as James tells us in James 4:7—"...*resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*"

C. We Can Fail To Nourish Our Love!

How do we fail to nourish our love for God so it will grow and flourish?

1. By Failing To Spend Time With Him In Prayer!

Jesus told His disciples in *Luke 18:1*—"...*men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*"

Philippians 4:6-7 instructs us to, "*be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*"

The more time we spend in prayer with Him, the more we will love HIM!

How do we fail to nourish our love for God so it will grow and flourish?

2. By Failing To Study His Precious Word!

(2 Timothy 2:15)

The more we learn of Him through His Word, the more we will love Him because of His Greatness and Glory!

3. By Failing To Serve Him With Gladness!

Psalms 100:2-"*Serve the LORD with gladness: come before His presence with singing.*"

Do you serve God?

How do you serve God?

Is serving God a burden or a blessing?

Is it a privilege or a pain?

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Why do you serve God?
Is it because you love HIM?
Or is it just out of a sense of DUTY?

Someone has once said:
"True service is love made visible."

4. By Failing To Sing Praises To Him And Take An Active Part In Worshiping Him For His Goodness! (Psalm 34:1-3)

If we haven't first learned to be worshipers, it doesn't really matter how well we do anything else.

"We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God." – A.W. Tozer,

That is what worship is all about!—We are overwhelmed by His Grace and Glory and cannot help but offer Him praise and thanksgiving because of His Goodness!

WE SHOULD LOVE GOD ABOVE ALL ELSE!

WE SOMETIMES FAIL TO LOVE GOD AS WE SHOULD!

III. WE SOMETIMES NEED TO BE DIRECTED BACK TO LOVING GOD!

Paul wrote in vs 5-*"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God..."*

I think we can all agree that we have times that our hearts need to be directed back to the love of God!

The love of God is the grand motive and principle of obedience!
This must occupy our hearts! But we know that our hearts are easily occupied by so many other things!

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God alone, by his Spirit, can direct it into His love, and keep it right!

When the Lord directs us back to His love, three things occur:
Conviction... Confession... Consecration.

How do we know our hearts need to be directed back to loving God?:

A. When Calvary Doesn't Break Us.

When we can read in *Luke 23:33-**"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him..."* and we're unaffected.

We know our hearts need directed back to God's love when we can sing of Calvary, think on Calvary, and speak of it without being emotionally affected by it!

Amy Carmichael said, *"There is something in Calvary that passes our understanding, and the words about the Precious Blood should never be read or sung except on the knees of our spirit"*

How do we know our hearts need to be directed back to loving God?:

When Calvary Doesn't Break Us.

B. When The Presence Of The Savior Doesn't Bless Us!

Many Fundamental Churches today have a firm foundation on doctrine, but a small focus. Doctrinally sound but, practically dead.

Many of our Churches have reached a point where worship of God is just mere form...a going through the motions with no heart in it.

We want to just worship God by a program and get it over with instead of worshiping in the power of the Spirit!

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Conclusion

Let me ask tonight, is the Lord your Passion? Do you Love Him above all else? As 1 Peter 2:7 tells us, "*Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious...*" Is He as precious to you as He should be?

If not, let Him direct you back to Himself tonight!