

BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS
HOW TO PRAY FOR OTHERS
1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-13

Introduction

We saw last week that Paul himself drew strength from the testimony of courage in these new believers! Although he had wanted to minister to them, by their standing firm in hard times they were ministering to him!

Paul is saying, “I can face my trials because I see how well you are facing yours.” In verse 9, he thanked God for all the joy that the Thessalonians gave to him!

We can tell from the writings of Paul that he cared very deeply for believers in other Churches wherever they were! We need to remember this because if we are not careful we can become focused almost totally on ourselves. Since God is a global God, we need to become world-minded Christians (not worldly).

One practical way we can develop a worldwide mission mindset is by corresponding with, and praying for, the different missionaries that we support as a Church.

Another idea would be to pray for believers as we read the newspaper or watch the news on TV—those going through disasters, upheavals, other things. Our prayers and words can actually encourage people to stand fast in the LORD and evangelize!

Note here that Paul doesn't pray for the Thessalonians trials to go away!

When we're going through something tough, we often pray that God would just take it away.

While it's good to pray in faith that God would deliver us from difficulty, maybe we should learn to pray that God would **teach** us what He wants us to learn through the trial that we're going through! Our trial might be something that He has designed just for us to experience for a particular reason or to grow us in some area of our lives!

Since problems are often part of God's plan, we find that Paul directs his prayers to other things.

BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS
HOW TO PRAY FOR OTHERS
1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-13

How then, does Paul pray for the Thessalonians? How should we pray for others?

I. HOW TO PRAY.

A. Pray Frequently! (10a) “*Night and day praying exceedingly...*” Effective prayer takes place in the morning, afternoon, evening, and even in the middle of the night.

He puts it this way in 5:17: “*Pray without ceasing.*”

He didn't just sit down once in a while and pray, “*Bless my friends over there in Thessalonica.*”

Corrie Ten Boom, who was held in a concentration camp, wrote this about prayer: “*When a Christian shuns fellowship with other Christians, the devil smiles. When he stops reading the Bible, the devil laughs. When he stops praying, the devil shouts for joy*” (Cited in Prayer Powerpoints, Victor Books, p. 109).

B. Pray Earnestly! (10a) “*...praying exceedingly...*” That's a very unusual expression, “*...praying exceedingly.*”

It has the idea of going above and beyond all normal measures. It means, “*super abundantly.*”

Prayer must be earnest to be effective. Weak, shallow, half-hearted prayers produce weak, shallow, half-hearted results.

God says in *Jeremiah 29:13*—“*And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*”

James 5:16—“*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*”

BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS
HOW TO PRAY FOR OTHERS
1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-13

C. **Pray Specifically!**

One of Paul's requests, which hadn't yet been answered, was very clear in **verse 10-11!**

Paul had been blocked from coming but that didn't prevent him from praying. He knew that God could clear the way and He prayed that He would do it.

We shouldn't be afraid to be specific in our prayers! Tell God exactly what it is you'd like Him to do! Some of our prayers are not answered because we are not precise enough in our requests!

James 4:2— "...ye have not, because ye ask not."

After revealing *how to pray – frequently, earnestly, and specifically*, in verses 10-13, Paul concludes by telling us...

II. **WHAT TO PRAY FOR OTHERS!**

A. **Pray For Faith To Mature!**

The reason Paul wanted to visit these new believers was because he wanted their faith to increase.

Look at the last part of **verse 10**: "*...and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.*"

perfect = to complete thoroughly, that is, repair (literally or figuratively) or adjust

This idea of "*perfecting that which is lacking*" was used for mending torn nets and setting broken bones.

He used the same word in Galatians 6:1 for restoring sinning saints.

BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS
HOW TO PRAY FOR OTHERS
1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-13

Galatians 6:1— "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Paul was committed to do all he could do to help Christians become more committed. God evidently answered this request, because when Paul wrote his next letter to them several months later in 2 Thessalonians 1:3, he expresses his thankfulness "*...because that your faith groweth exceedingly...*"

Pray For Faith To Mature!

B. **Pray For Love To Increase!**

It's easy when we go through trials to become focused just on ourselves, so look at what Paul prays in **verse 12!**

Jesus said that love is the mark or badge of true followers or disciples of Christ! (**John 13:34-35**)

Love is the mark of a successful Church, and the only way to love is to know the love of God.

Paul's concern is that their love for each other would be so evident that it would splash over into others as well.

Notice that this love was not only to be directed to believers, but "*toward all men*," meaning that we must love lost people as well.

This request is also answered in **2 Thessalonians 1:3!**

C. **Pray For Lives To Be Holy!**

Pray that faith would mature, that love would increase, and that would lead to holiness.

**BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS
HOW TO PRAY FOR OTHERS
1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-13**

Here we see Paul's favorite trifecta again – **faith, love and hope.**

Look at **verse 13.**

We're to pray that believers would live sanctified lives, that they would be blameless, even when persecution comes and even when persecution becomes pervasive.

The second coming of Christ should have a purifying affect on our lives. Since He can come at any moment, we certainly want to be ready!

Conclusion

We should take some time in our prayers and focus on believers who are being persecuted for their faith.

Hebrews 13:3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

When we do, we should pray frequently, earnestly, and specifically.

We should pray that their faith would mature, that their love would increase and that they would lead holy lives!

Pray that the gospel would be proclaimed boldly and that people would come to saving faith! **(Ephesians 6:18-19)**

Pray for boldness, grace to forgive, open doors, wisdom for ruling authorities, growth of church leaders, and unity in the church.