



1 & 2 Thessalonians: Chapter 3

Session II:

God's Co-worker

1 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone,

2 and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,

3 that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.

4 For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.

5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you—

7 therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith.

8 For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.



9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God,

10 night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith

11 Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,

13 so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

"1 Thessalonians 3 (New King James Version)." Blue Letter Bible. Sowing Circle. Web. 3 Dec, 2014. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=1Th&c=2&p=0&rl=0&t=NKJV>>.

all Greek and Hebrew definitions are taken from: www.blueletterbible.org



We have made it to chapter 3 of 1 Thessalonians. God is pleased with our progress and our perseverance! Before we begin our study time today, please pause and go before our Heavenly Father in prayer. Tell Him about your concerns and failings and receive the forgiveness He so readily offers. Sign your initials on the line when you have finished praying _____.

Please read 1 Thessalonians 3 on pages 1 and 2. Take your time to mark, circle, or comment in the margins on any verse that is meaningful to you.

According to verses 2-3, why do Christians need one another?

We will revisit these concepts a little later in our study.

What words are used to describe Timothy (verse 2)?

Please read the following definitions of *brother*: "persons united by a common interest or calling," and "persons who have a common father."

As Christians, what is our common interest?

What is our common calling?

We have a *common father*, but our common Father is anything but common. He is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Almighty, All-knowing Creator of the Universe.

In my immediate family, I do not have any brothers—I have three sisters. When one of us is in need or hurting, day or night, convenient or ill-timed, the other three siblings flock together and lift up the hurting sister. Believers in Christ should act the same way.

Do you know of another believer who is in need right now?

How can you use your gifts to help your hurting brother or sister?



Another word used to describe Timothy (which can be applied to all believers) is *minister*. In the original Greek, *minister* translates as the servant of a king, one who executes the commands of another, a deacon of a church, a waiter, one who serves food and drink.

As ministers of Christ, what food and drink do we serve to other believers and the lost?

Manna from Heaven, the Bread of Life, and the Living Water. Jesus satisfies our every hunger and slackens our great thirst. In the margin on page 1, next to verse 2, please draw a loaf of bread, and a jug of water.

Timothy is also described as a *fellow laborer*. *Fellow laborer* transliterates as *synergos*, which means, "to work together with others, to be equipped with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ." Do you recognize an English word within *synergos*? Our English word *synergy* is derived from *synergos*. Webster's dictionary defines *synergy* as, "the increased effectiveness that results when two or more people or businesses work together." The meaning of this word adds power to the belief that it is unhealthy to be a "Lone Ranger Christian." We are more effective together than apart. Who wouldn't be more effective operating in conjunction with the power of the Holy Spirit and fellow believers in Christ?

Please read 1 Thess. 3:2 in the NLT:

"... and we sent Timothy to visit you. He is our brother and God's co-worker in proclaiming the Good News of Christ. We sent him to strengthen you, to encourage you in your faith."

According to the NLT, Who is our co-worker?

The NLT translation spotlights the working relationship between believers and God, our Father. Think for a moment about the term *co-worker*. What do co-workers do? Fill in the list below.

Co-workers:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Think of the co-workers in your life. What makes a co-worker a good co-worker or a bad co-worker?

God is constantly working for His kingdom. Day and night, He never sleeps or slumbers. What does this look like? Please look up the following verses and record what you learn about God's kingdom work on the chart below.

Verses	God's Work	What I can do
Isaiah 61:1-3		
Matthew 10:7-8		
Matthew 28:19-20		
Luke 19:10		

God asks us to join Him in His kingdom work; to be His co-worker. Part of God's kingdom work is His work in your life. He is constantly working to transform you into the image of Christ so you will be more useful in His kingdom.

What area of your life is currently under construction?

Remember the good co-worker/bad co-worker question from above? As far as God's work in your life, are you a good co-worker or a bad co-worker?

How can you more fully cooperate with His work in your life?



Please read verse 2 again.

What two things does a co-worker of God labor to accomplish in the lives of others?

The Greek word for *establish* is *sterizo*, which means to place firmly, to make fast, to make stable, *one's mind, keep the face turned* (emphasis mine). As the definition references, the key ingredient of a stable faith is a steady mind; one that constantly thinks God's thoughts and rejects any that do not line-up with the truth of the Gospel.

How can you help someone keep their face turned to Christ?

Parakaleo is the original Greek word for *encourage*. Among other things, it means to call to one's side, to console, to comfort, to instruct, to teach. *Parakaleo* is often used in reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. God has sent His Holy Spirit to fill us so we can be the hands and feet of Jesus to a hurting and wounded world.

Someone in your life needs *parakaleo*, your encouragement. God is calling you to be His co-worker and encourage a brother or sister in Christ. Sometimes the person who needs encouragement is you. Don't hesitate to go before the Lord and ask Him to send encouragement.

One morning, several years ago, I was in need of encouragement. I was feeling unsure of God's love for me; I was certain I had sinned too long and too deep for God to love me. I prayed and asked Him to encourage me very specifically about His love for me. After I prayed, I went to school and tried to focus my mind on the day ahead.

As I walked down the hall to my classroom, I met one of my little first graders. She said she made a present for me last night. I felt the Holy Spirit nudge my soul as I opened the present—God was answering my prayer (little did I know how specifically He was answering my prayer!). My heart skipped for joy when I read the message on my beautiful present:



Talk about specific encouragement! To this day I carry my precious gift in my Bible case. I often look at it and reflect on how God uses other people when one of His co-workers needs a little encouragement.

Well, co-worker in Christ, you are not alone. There are thousands of other co-workers from every tribe, tongue and nation in this world, working together with God to make disciples of all nations, encourage the church and bring His Name great glory. So let's get busy. We have work to do!

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