



A Study in 1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 3.1-4.12

3:1 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, ² and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, ³ that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. ⁴ For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you – ⁷ for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. ⁸ For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. ⁹ For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, ¹⁰ as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, ¹² and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³ so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

4:1 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

⁹ Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, ¹⁰ for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹ and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹² so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

Timothy's Good News (3.6-10)

⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you-- ⁷ for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. ⁸ For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. ⁹ For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, ¹⁰ as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

1. "Good News"
 - a. "your faith and love"
 - b. "you always remember us kindly and long to see us" (3.6)
2. "in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith" (3,7)
3. "for now we live" (3.8a)
 - a. "if you are standing fast in the Lord" (3.8b)
4. "for what thanksgiving can we return to God for you?"¹
 - a. "for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God"
 - b. "as we pray most earnestly night and day"
 - i. that we may see you face to face
 - ii. and supply what is lacking in your faith"

Paul's Prayer (3.11-13)

Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, ¹² and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all (cf. 4.9-12), as we do for you, ¹³ so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father (cf. 4.1-8), at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints (cf. 4.13-5.11).

1. Prayer and exhortation (3.11-13; 4.1-5.11; 5.23-24)
 - a. **3.11-13:** Prayer for holiness and love in the light of Jesus' coming
 - b. **4.1-5.11:** Exhortation and instruction on holiness, love, and Jesus' coming
 - c. **5.23-24:** Prayer of confidence that Paul's prayer will be answered and his teaching will be applied by the Holy Spirit: "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."

¹ **Psalm 116:12** What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me?

2. Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you²
3. may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you (cf. 1 Thess 4.9-12; 2.7-12)
 - a. so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father (cf. 1 Thess 4.1-8)
 - b. at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints (cf. 1 Thess 4.13-5.11)³

Establish your hearts blameless in holiness (4.1-8)

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.² For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you.⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

1. Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. (4.1)
2. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus (4.2)
3. For this is the will of God, your sanctification (4.3a)⁴
 - a. that you abstain from sexual immorality (4.3b)
 - b. that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God (4.4-5)⁵

² **Acts 20:1-4** After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia. ² When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece. ³ There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. ⁴ Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

³ Cf. Zechariah 14.5 (re: the coming Day of the Lord): Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

⁴ **Romans 6:19-22** I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. ²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

⁵ Cf. Romans 1.18-32 (re: idolatry, knowledge, and human depravity [esp. sexual depravity]).

- c. that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter (4.6a)
 - i. because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you (4.6b)⁶
- 4. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness (4.7)⁷
- 5. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you (4.8)⁸

Increase and Abound in Love (4.9-12)

Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,¹⁰ for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more,¹¹ and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you,¹² so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

- 1. Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you (4.9a)
 - a. for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another (4.9b)⁹
 - b. for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia (4.10a)
- 2. But we urge you, brothers,
 - a. to do this more and more (4.10b)
 - b. and to aspire to live quietly (4.11a)
 - c. to mind your own affairs (4.11b)
 - d. to work with your hands, as we instructed you (4.11c)
 - i. so that you may walk properly before outsiders and (4.12a)
 - ii. be dependent on no one (4.12b)

⁶ Cf. Psalm 94 (re: God's vengeance).

⁷ **Colossians 3:5-6** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. (Cf. Eph 5.1-6.)

⁸ **Ezekiel 36:25-27** I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

⁹ Cf. John 13.34; 15.12, 17.