

1 Thessalonians 3 New American Standard Bible

Encouragement of Timothy's Visit

Therefore, when we could no longer endure *it*, we thought it best to be left behind, alone at Athens, ² and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the benefit of your faith, ³ so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. ⁴ For even when we were with you, we *kept* telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it happened, as you know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could no longer endure *it*, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be for nothing.

⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also *long to see you*, ⁷ for this reason, brothers *and sisters*, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; ⁸ for now we *really* live, if you stand firm in the Lord. ⁹ For what thanks can we give to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice because of you before our God, ¹⁰ as we keep praying most earnestly night and day that we may see your faces, and may complete 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 cause you to increase and overflow in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also *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.

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We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Pauls Observations and insights

1. To endure, is to have the capacity to manage a situation that is trying every natural resource you possess within your humanity.

2. There is a breaking point when you are empty of everything you have to restrain yourself. _
3. When you are left with nothing else but to act.
4. It is said of Jesus 'He endured the cross, despising the shame' - Hebrews 12:2 - looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.
5. There is no gain in life without pain. Difficult times are a part of life, no-one wants them but that is not going to stop them from coming.
6. James tells us 'persevere through the trials and you will develop character'.
7. There is always a right way to manage a trial, if you are going to overcome with victory you will need to learn this right way.
8. Paul, on behalf of the leadership team, felt it best trusting in his feelings, but this is not necessary. The best thing to do is to trust in God during a trial.
9. Proverbs 3 says 'lean not on your own understanding.'
10. Paul and Silvanus would stay but they would send Timothy to the church at Thessalonica, for Timothy to bring back a message as to how things had turned out for them there.
11. Paul was able to trust Timothy's judgement and the way he evaluated a situation.
12. Listening to the right people when you need advice is essential, it is there that you discover who you can trust.
13. Being honest is crucial, what you don't need are people pleasers, true love is telling you the truth, no matter what your feelings are saying.
14. Timothy is going to them like the Cavalry that never arrived to save Colonel Custer from the Apaches.
15. When the Cavalry comes it brings reinforcements of truth, like encouragement to keep going and strength to stand firm in all that you know is right.
16. When you believe in your spirit being, many enemies will attack what you have believed, the battle is the to-ing and fro-ing, but the reinforcements the Cavalry bring, like encouragement and strength, will enable you to stand firm.
17. In Jesus greatest conflict with the devil, in the desert, He used the word of God to defeat His attacker.
18. Whose report will you believe?
19. Afflictions are not welcome but they are inevitable. The enemy of self-pity will encourage you to believe in the idea that 'it is not fair' and 'why is this happening to me?'

20. The quicker you accept trials are a part of life, the quicker you will defeat the enemy of self-pity and woe is me.
21. Paul's concern that the church in Thessalonica had lost their faith because of their suffering was unfounded.
22. Fear in Paul got the better of him. It demonstrated itself with concern.
23. Concern is not something we should make friends with, it is a part of the family of fear and fear is God's enemy. It will wear you down and make you lose your way. Fear is a lack of trust in God to bring about His best for you.
24. Timothy returns and brings good news and it brought joy to Paul, he reveals that they had remained faithful and were full of love.
25. When Paul taught the Thessalonians to trust in God they took him at his word and they believed what Paul preached.
26. They were unwavering, obedient children of the truth.
27. Seeing each other and being together is what believers in Christ do, to not gather as saints is an attack on the fellowship of all believers, isolation and separation will make everyone vulnerable.
28. Paul talks about his distress and affliction.
29. Paul had not trusted God for the Thessalonians. If he had he would of known all was going to be well with them, because he trusted his fears he was afflicted with weakness and anxiety.
30. This church actually learnt the truth about trusting God, they had worked through their trial, developed character through perseverance and had overcome.
31. To stand firm in the Lord and live, is to trust God over your circumstances, over your thoughts and over your feelings.
32. When you know you are in His care and He will look after you, all things work together for good for those who love the Lord.
33. When your heart is bursting with joy and appreciation to God for His blessing to you, it leaves you overwhelmed with love for Him and no words can describe your experience. No other experience on earth can compare with this joy.
34. Earnest prayer is prayer you really mean, not lip service, but when your spirit is engaging in the experience, when all of your inhibitions are laid down and you come to God unafraid, just like Hannah did in the temple.
35. Paul acknowledges that these Thessalonians have exercised great faith and he wants to see them.
36. Paul gives a gracious blessing to this church, each one of us from time to time, need to receive a gracious blessing.

37. When we increase in love for each other we reflect the heart of the Father for His children.
38. To have your heart established is to be full of heavens realities and passions, to have no room for worldly ways or entanglements to serve the flesh and the old nature.
39. We need to know Jesus Christ came once, but we also need to know Jesus Christ is coming again, the word 'Maranatha' means 'come Lord Jesus, come' and this is the hope for every Christian.