

## Study 3

### Read 2 Thessalonians Chapter 3

3:1

What does Paul mean by praying that the Word of the Lord might speed ahead? Speed ahead of what?

Move quickly how? Can you think of any other verses that might enlighten our understanding of this concept?

3:2

What is it that keeps men from being wicked and evil?

3:3

What a striking and lovely contrast between the end of the last verse and this one! Not all have faith, but the Lord is faithful! What are the two things that Paul claims here the Lord will do for them?

How does God guard us against the evil one? We know that He appoints us to suffer for His name (Phil. 1:29) and that sometimes He ordains calamity. We also find in the book of Job an allowance and even initiation on God's part of Satan's testing Job. We know many stories of Christians who have undergone unbelievable grief and suffering and even death in times of persecution at the hands of evil men. How then does God guard us against the evil one?

1 John 5:18 says, "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God [Jesus] protects him, and the evil one does not touch him."

How would you explain this concept of God's protection to a child who is fearful of monsters or "bad guys" while also faithfully upholding the hard reality that God sometimes permits and uses evil?

3:3-4

What are the two things here to which Paul is wanting the Lord to direct the Thessalonians' hearts?

In what way would God's love and Christ's steadfastness be a help to them right now?

How could the knowledge of these characteristics of our God work itself out practically in their lives?

What about in your life?

3:5

Is the "love of God" phrase used here referring to a love FOR God, or GOD's love? Why?

As pointed out by Thomas, it's God's love and Christ's steadfastness that provide the strongest possible motivation for continued obedience in the Christian life.

3:6

See how strong a warning Paul is issuing to the Thessalonians in this verse! He not only commands them what to do, but also strengthens the command by grounding its authoritative nature in the name of Jesus. Take a look at 3:11. What had Paul, Silas, and Timothy heard about the Thessalonians that needed such strong correction?

What were the Thessalonians to do with a believer who was living an undisciplined, idle lifestyle?

3:8

What was Paul's reason for this instruction? Why were they to be working hard?

3:11

For those of us who are wives and mothers, there is a work that God has called us to in his Word. See Titus chapter 2. What work is that?

How are you doing at this work? How often do you neglect this work for other kinds of busyness?

Are there good things in your life, whether you are single or married, that are receiving disproportionate amounts of time over and above the BETTER and BEST things? If so, what? And how would God have you to make changes to align more with his will?

3:12

Notice that this section is bracketed on both ends by the word “command.” Once again Paul forcefully instructs that they are to be working rather than living idly. So we see that Paul takes hard work and financial independence quite seriously. It’s very common for people to come to a church (sometimes claiming to be believers) and expect handouts, who might not be motivated to get a job. Are we to help them, according to the application of these verses? If not, how exactly should we interact with them?

We are likely going to face more people now than ever who are relying on the government to pay for their lives and who refuse to get jobs, in order to continue receiving their government check. Let us be ready with these verses in our minds to, in love, address this sort of thinking.

3:13

How easy it is to grow weary in doing the things God has given us to do! Whether this command is to the wealthier believers in the congregation who had been helping the less fortunate, (as the ESV Study Bible notes indicate), or whether to the Thessalonian believers who were likely weary of disciplining the idle, (as suggested in the Expositor’s Commentary), or whether to the church in general about continuing in the good work of faithful church discipline, it is unclear. In any case, God calls us to persevere in doing what is good.

To what has God called you personally at the moment that is causing you weariness and temptation to give up? Hear His encouraging Word here to persevere.

3:15

Church discipline is for those who claim to be believers, and it is for the purpose of restoration. Ideally, when a brother is confronted in his sin, and actions are taken to call him back, he will repent and be restored to fellowship. Discipline should never degenerate into meanness or cruelty, with a purpose of vengeance or degradation. He is to be treated as a brother.

3:16

Jesus is called the “Lord of peace” here. In what ways do the Thessalonians need a Lord like this?

In what way does God give us peace? He gives us Himself! He is with us! How marvelous a thought! We are His, and He is ours!

3:17

How does Paul authenticate his letter at the end?

Look back to chapter 2, verse 2. You can see here that it seems someone might have been claiming to have written something by Paul who was not Paul.

NOTE: According to Thomas in The Expositor’s Commentary, Paul’s handwriting at the end would have “furnished a key by which his Thessalonian readers could recognize a spurious Epistle bearing his name.” So, his signature helped to ward off false teaching.

How assuring it is to hear the words of this letter from one who has suffered so much himself. Wouldn’t it be so different to receive a letter like this from someone who has not been touched personally by deep suffering? As 2 Corinthians 1 says, God uses those who have been comforted in suffering to comfort others in their sufferings.

As we wrap up this final chapter of our Bible study, allow yourself to receive this prayer offered for you: Lord God of the heavens and Lord of our days, direct us all to your perfect love and the steadfastness of our Lord Jesus as we seek to persevere in our own lives. Lord, grant us grace to endure whatever you might have for us, not growing weary, and trusting you to be the good, kind and wise God that you are. May you use us, as you did Paul and his companions, to take your word to the nations and to delight in Jesus right here where we are today, for your glory and our good. We pray these things in the glorious, majestic, powerful name of Jesus, our coming King, Amen.