

LESSON 3 – MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT

I Thessalonians 3:1-13

Summary

Paul's, Timothy's, and Silas' great spiritual affection for the Thessalonians is most evident in this third and final chapter of the epistle's first half. Although Paul's company's love for the Thessalonians can be seen in the preceding chapters, the dependency and almost symbiotic relationship is clearly visible here. Paul's concern for their spiritual well-being prompts Timothy's encouraging visit to the Thessalonians, which results in a good report to Paul, which increases his joy, thanksgiving, and prayers for them, which only serves to strengthen the Thessalonians. Cynically, this could be viewed as a vulnerable, cyclical dependency; when in reality, we are observing the realization of brethren's great opportunity to mutually encourage and uplift each other.

Bible Reading With Questions

Timothy's Message from Paul – I Thessalonians 3:1-5

1. Why did Paul send Timothy to Thessalonica?
2. How could the Thessalonians have been "shaken"? What does that mean? Why should they have not been "shaken"?
3. How could the "tempter" have rendered Paul's labor to be vain?

Timothy's Report to Paul – I Thessalonians 3:6-8

4. What report did Timothy bring back to Paul?
5. What was Paul's reaction to Timothy's report?
6. How would Paul's life be dependent upon the Thessalonians' steadfastness? (Explain verse 8.)

Paul's Prayer for the Thessalonians – I Thessalonians 3:9-13

7. Why was Paul thankful for the Thessalonians?
8. Did Paul's prayer arise *merely* from an emotional attachment to the Thessalonians? Explain.
9. What 3 things did Paul wish or pray for the Thessalonians, and how are they related?
10. Who was an example of love to the Thessalonians? How can he serve as an example for us?