

FIRST AND SECOND

THESSALONIANS

Living in Light of Christ's Return

STANDING STRONG

BIG IDEA: We are called to minister to new believers so they stand strong in their faith.

DATE: Wednesday, October 14 and Sunday, October 18, 2026

SCRIPTURE: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13 (CSB)

OPENING QUESTION

What was the best “on the job training” you ever experienced? *What did the trainer do to help you master your new responsibilities? What was your part in this process?*

SETTING THE STAGE

Before a child can walk, he must learn to stand. Usually, the father and mother teach the child to stand and then to walk. Paul was a “spiritual parent” to these believers, but he had been forced to leave Thessalonica. How, then, could he help these young Christians learn to stand in the trials of life? In the first two chapters, Paul explained how the church was born and nurtured. Now he dealt with the next step in maturity: how the church was to stand. The key thought is expressed in 1 Thessalonians 3:8: *“For now we live, if you stand firm in the Lord.”*

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13 (CSB)

Therefore, when we could no longer stand it, we thought it was better to be left alone in Athens. ² And we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s coworker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you concerning your faith, ³ so that no one will be shaken by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. ⁴ In fact, when we were with you, we told you in advance that we were going to experience affliction, and as you know, it happened. ⁵ For this reason, when I could no longer stand it, I also sent him to find out about your faith, fearing that the tempter had tempted you and that our labor might be for nothing.

⁶ But now Timothy has come to us from you and brought us good news about your faith and love. He reported that you always have good memories of us and that you long to see us, as we also long to see you. ⁷ Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and affliction, we were encouraged about you through your faith. ⁸ For now we live, if you stand firm in the Lord.

⁹ How can we thank God for you in return for all the joy we experience before our God because of you, ¹⁰ as we pray very earnestly night and day to see you face to face and to 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 with love for one another and for everyone, just as we do for you. ¹³ May he make your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. Amen.

DISCUSSION

Paul explained three ministries that he performed to help these new Christians become firmly established.

HE SENT THEM A HELPER

READ: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

What kind of person can help younger believers grow in the Lord? What are the basic requirements for someone who can lead others? Why was Timothy the perfect choice to send to Thessalonica?

HE WROTE THEM A LETTER

READ: 1 Thessalonians 3:6-8

How have you used letters, notes or other things to encourage your children or those whom you disciple? How has someone encouraged *your* faith?

HE PRAYED FOR THEM

READ: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

What are some things you pray for young believers– both physical and spiritual?

Paul prayed for three specific requests and in it we find a model of how we can pray:

- ✓ that their faith might mature (v. 10)
- ✓ that their love might abound (v. 12)
- ✓ for holiness of life (v. 13)

GROUP TIME: Circle up and discuss these questions together.

- What has rocked your faith? Does what you believe about God on a sunny day unravel on a stormy day? How has your faith held firm and steady in the storms of life?
- How have you helped a young believer move toward maturity in their faith? What challenges did you face?

GOING FORWARD

Paul sent a helper, Timothy wrote a letter and Paul prayed a three-fold prayer for the new believers. Who in your life could use a helper? A letter? How fervently are you praying for young believers? Whose faith can you encourage this week?