

letters to Thessalonica

#4, waiting, I Thess 3:1-13

The subject or far context of this lesson could really have started back in I Thess 2:17, But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while – in person, not in spirit – were all the more eager with great desire to see your face.

The team had been whisked out of Thessalonica – out of harm. Paul, in this chapter, writes about his concerns for the believers in Thessalonica, while he waits in Athens.

Before we get into this lesson, let's do a little exercise. Paul uses the term “we”, meaning himself and someone else. Sometimes the team (Paul, Silas and Timothy) gets split up making it difficult to determine who “we” actually is. Using Acts 17:10-15 & I Thess 3:2, answer the following questions.

[1.] Who was sent to Berea?

Who don't we know about?

[2.] From Berea, who was sent to the coast?

Who stayed at Berea?

[3.] Who was taken to Athens?

Who was commanded by Paul to come to Athens?

[4.] Where was Silas when Paul waited in Athens?

Who was commanded to go back to Thessalonica from Athens?

[5.] What do you feel about Paul sending a team member back into danger and not go himself or put another way, why was it safer for the team member than for Paul?

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1 Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone,

[6.] v:1, when we could endure it no longer, Looking back at I Thess 2:17, what was the team having a hard time enduring?

[7.] v:1 again, Looking back at Acts 17:10, describe the team's departure from the new believers.

three Sabbaths (Acts 17:2), The length of his initial public ministry. The actual amount of time spent in Thessalonica would have been longer, extending perhaps 4 – 6 months.

MacArthur Study Bible

[7.] v:1 again, Paul described his relationship with the new brethren I Thess 2:7, “as a nursing *mother* tenderly cares for her own children.” How would a mother feel if torn from a 6-mo old child?

2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, 3 so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.

[8.] v:2-3, we sent Timothy, Seeing Paul's reason for sending Timothy, we get a glimpse of his inner concern. What was it?

[9.] v:2-3 again, strengthen and encourage you, OK, for this question you're Timothy. Jot down your plan to accomplish this.

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4 For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.

5 For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

[10.] question [9.], In order to stay focused on accomplishing this, what task/s are you going to put on the “back burner”?

[11.] v:4, we kept telling you in advance, If Paul didn't have a premonition, how did he know what was going to happen?

[12.] v:5, the tempter might have tempted you, From the list below, choose what Satan might have done to tempt these believers?

- a) Burned the city down.
- b) Got all the believers drunk so that they would deny Christ.
- c) Scared the wits out of them so that they lived in fear and not faith.
- d) Tried to disprove all that Paul taught.
- e) none of the above

[13.] v:5 again, Suppose that Satan sensed that the Thessalonians rested a lot on the personality and presence of Paul, Silas & Timothy and not on God. What could his tactic be then?

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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, brethren, 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 render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account, 10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

11 Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; 12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you;

[14.] v:6, now that Timothy has come, **From this verse, write down what Timothy told Paul.**

[15.]v:7-8, now we really live, **The ultimate goal of any missionary, pastor or teacher is stated in this verse. What is it?**

[16.] Something to think about. We looked at the MacArthur note earlier in this lesson. We also recall that on this trip (Acts 15:41) the team was strengthening the churches. Give your opinion and reasons as to how long it should take for a church to be able to stand on its own (without a missionary).

[17.] v:9-10, complete what is lacking, **If this were your task, how would you determine what was really lacking?**

[18.] v:11-12, love for one another, and for all people, **Since “God is love” (I Jn 4:6) and we withhold love from “one another” and “all people”, what are we really withholding?**

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13 so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

[19.] v:13, so that He, This verse tells us that God is working in us 24/7. What is God doing?

[20.] v:13 again, What can we do to greatly hinder God's work in our lives?

NOTES