

“A Shepherd’s Prayer for His Sheep”

1 Thessalonians 3:10-13 Part 1



I. A Perfecting (Maturing) Faith in 3:10-11

The triad of Christian virtues: faith, hope, and love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

- A. Apostle’s concern is their growth in each of these spiritual realities.
- B. Mentioned at the beginning (1:3) and the end (5:8) of his letter.
- C. 3:10, “**complete** what is lacking in your faith” = “_____”
- D. “*equipping of the saints for work of service, building up the body*” _____
- E. Paul’s goal was not to return to lead them into some emotional experience to get them believing more fervently in what they already knew, but to **expand** their _____ of God through His revealed Truth, which in turn would enlarge their trust in Him and enable them to walk in greater obedience to His will. This is perfecting, completing, maturing faith.
- F. The Apostle Paul, and every Pastor-Elder, ministers under a Divine Mandate: to _____ the _____. The primary function of the Pastor-Elder is _____: the spiritual maturity of the believers under his care. Acts 9:15-18; 13:1-4; 20:32; 1 Corinthians 9:16; Ephesians 3:1-8; 1 Peter 2:2
- G. Are you growing in the Faith? How do you know if you are? The precepts and principles of Holy Scripture are the windows through which believers look to see God and understand His glory and His will for their lives. Psalm 19:7-8; 119:9, 93, 99, 105, 130; Proverbs 6:23; Romans 15:4; James 1:21-22, 25

Your _____ to the truths of God’s Word allows you to know if you are growing in the Faith:

1. Your _____ of God’s Word is increasing; “*Let the Word of Christ _____ dwell within you, in wisdom teaching and*

admonishing one another, singing with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” - Colossians 3:16

See MacArthur Study Bible footnotes at Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18-19.

2. Your _____ in God is greater than before; *“God carried out His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom we have boldness and confident access to the Father through faith in Him.” - Ephesians 3:11-12; Hebrews 4:16; 10:19; 1 John 2:28; 3:21; 5:14 = HIS will; not my will.*
3. Your trust in God’s _____ is stronger than before; *“I know that You can do all things and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.” Job 42:1-6; Romans 8:28-30; James 1:5-8.*
4. Your _____ to Him is _____; *“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” - John 14:15; James 1:5-8; Deuteronomy 17:19-20.*
5. You are finding _____ in your _____; *“Consider it all joy my brethren when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.” - James 1:2-3; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.*

A perfecting, maturing faith is the foundation for obedient and powerful _____ . Acts 14:22; 2 Corinthians 1:24; 5:7; Colossians 1:23; 1 Timothy 1:4; Hebrews 11:6; Jude 20.

Paul’s prayer was answered a few months later as he wrote his second letter to the Thessalonians, *“We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting because your faith is greatly enlarged.” - 2 Thessalonians 1:3*

II. Actions Items: Application: What God Expects of You Today

- A. If you are genuinely born again, you must grow in the Faith (1 Peter 2:2).
- B. You must continually grow in your knowledge of Scripture; it must saturate and permeate your thoughts, words, and deeds (Col. 3:16).
- C. You must increase your trust that God is perfectly, totally in control.
- D. You must increase in your level of obedience to Holy Scripture.
- E. You must humbly accept trials and hardships as God’s loving tool of sanctification to shape you into the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29c).
- F. Circle any of the 5 marks of growing faith above in which you, by God’s grace, are increasing. Place any X over any of the 5 marks of growing faith in which you are not seeing consistent increase. Why do you think you are not growing in that particular area? What will you do to spark growth in the areas that are lacking consistent increase? Pray daily; God will help!

**A SHEPHERD'S
PRAYER FOR HIS
SHEEP**

I THESSALONIANS 3:10-13

TRIAD OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

*“Now these three abide:
faith, hope, and love.”*

I Corinthians 3:13

A COMPLETE TRIAD

“your work of faith, labor of love, steadfastness of hope”

“having put on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of salvation hope” (1:3; 5:8)

1 THESSALONIANS 3:10

*“Praying night and day to see you again
so that we can complete what is
lacking in your faith.”*

= “perfect, mature”

Each of us is a sanctified work in progress! (Phl. 1:6)

APOSTLE'S GOAL: EPHESIANS 4

Christ gave various offices of ministry in the church *“for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ until all are ‘complete, perfected, mature.’”*

Ephesians 4:11-13

“EQUIPPING FOR SERVICE”

CONTEXT IS SCRIPTURE KNOWLEDGE AS KEY

“equipping” not referring to a “skill set”

- “*to be made fit, complete,*” *to bring to maturity from sin to obedience*”

“service” is required spiritual service to God & Christ of every believer

APOSTLE PAUL'S GOAL

His goal was not to emotionally arouse them to be more fervent in what they already had, but to expand their knowledge of God through revealed Truth: Scripture.

Are you expanding?

EVERY PASTOR'S DIVINE MANDATE

Teach the Truth

The primary function of the Pastor-Elder is edification – the spiritual maturity of the believers under his care.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:16

“

“For I am under compulsion; woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel.”

ACTS 20:32

“And now I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all the sanctified.”

ARE YOU GROWING?

“The precepts and principles of Holy Scripture are the windows through which believers look to see God and understand His glory and His will for their lives.” – John MacArthur

PSALM 19:7-8

“The Law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making the simple wise. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

PROVERBS 6:23

“For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is a light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life.”

ROMANS 15:4

“Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

ARE YOU GROWING?

Your response to the truths of God's Word allows you to know if you are growing in the Faith.

#1

Your knowledge of God's Word is increasing. "Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you, in wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, singing with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

“WORD RICHLY DWELL”

“richly” = “superabundance, overflow”

“dwell” = “to be completely at home”

Total saturation of thought, word, deeds.

#2

Your **confidence** in God is greater than before.

“God carried out His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom we have boldness and confident access to the Father through faith.”

#3

Your trust in God's sovereignty is stronger than before. *“I know that You can do all things and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.”*

Job 42:1-6

#4

Your obedience to God and Christ is consistent. *“If you love Me, you will obey what I command.”*

John 14:15; Deuteronomy 17:19-20

#5

You are finding **joy** in your **trials**. “Consider it all joy my brethren when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.”

ARE YOU GROWING?

A perfecting, maturing faith is the foundation for obedient and powerful *Christian living.*

ACTS 14:22

*“Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples there, encouraging them to **continue** in the faith.”*

COLOSSIANS 1:22-23

“Christ reconciled us in His fleshly body through death...if indeed you continue in the Faith firmly established and steadfast, not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”

PAUL'S PRAYER ANSWERED

“We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting because your faith is greatly enlarged.”

2 Thessalonians 1:3

HOW WAS HIS PRAYER ANSWERED?

1. They “excelled still more” (4:1)
2. God finishes what He begins.
Philippians 1:6

ACTIONS ITEMS

1. You must grow in the Faith.
2. You must grow in biblical knowledge.
3. You must increase your trust in God.
4. You must increase your obedience.
5. You must humbly accept trials.