

---

# Words of Truth

---

## I Thessalonians 3:11-13

By: Brian A. Yeager

*“Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints”* (I Thessalonians 3:11-13). These great passages give us insight into the role of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ in the work of teaching in the first century. That included the fact that God was behind where men went to teach (I Corinthians 4:19; 16:7).

How did the Lord direct Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus unto the Thessalonians? Fortunately, there is a clear context in the New Testament that shows us how that process worked. Notice: *“Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them”* (Acts 16:1-10). As you can see from the example above, the Holy Spirit directed the Apostles where to go as well as who they were supposed to teach (cf. Acts 11:1-14).

Once Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus arrived in Thessalonica the Lord would work through them to help the Thessalonians increase and abound in love. In fact, even before they came, they began the teaching process in this same letter. Notice: *“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more”* (I Thessalonians 4:9-10). When you take a look at

the second letter written to the saints in Thessalonica, you find that they did grow in their love toward one another (II Thessalonians 1:3).

Christians need to grow in love toward one another (II Peter 1:3-11). One of the ways the world can see Christ in us is in how we love one another (John 13:34-35). There are times wherein we are presented with clear opportunities to show our love toward one another (Proverbs 27:5-6, Romans 16:3-4 [cf. John 15:12-13], Hebrews 10:24, I John 3:14-18, etc.). However, brotherly love is not just something that should be shown when occasions arise. Brotherly love is to be continual (Hebrews 13:1).

The love that these brethren were to grow in was not just towards brethren. They were to grow in their love towards “all” as well. “Love thy neighbor” has been taught since the days of the Law of Moses (Leviticus 19:18). Jesus taught to “love thy neighbor” (Matthew 22:37-40) and so it was taught after He departed this world too (Romans 13:9-10 and James 2:8-13). For those that question if “thy neighbor” includes someone of the world that you do not know, they should read the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were able to use themselves as examples of abounding in love. Certainly, teachers of the Gospel should be and must be good examples that can be followed by others (I Corinthians 4:16, I Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17, II Thessalonians 3:7-9, and I Timothy 4:12-16). This principle is not just true for those teaching the Gospel. All Christians need to be good examples that can be followed (Matthew 5:14-16, Philippians 2:14-16, Titus 2:2-8, and I Peter 3:1-6).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were going to be sent by God to Thessalonica to the end that they would “stablish” the hearts of the saints in Thessalonica. The word translated “stablish” [στηρίζω] is defined as: “To set fast, that is, (literally) to turn resolutely in a certain direction, or (figuratively) to confirm: - fix, (e-) stablish, stedfastly set, strengthen” (Strong’s # 4741). Timothy had already come for that purpose (I Thessalonians 3:2). The need for these three to come together showed there was still work to do.

The goal was for the saints in Thessalonica to be unblameable when Jesus returns with His angels (Colossians 1:12-23 and II Thessalonians 1:7-10). We all need to be in such a state when Jesus returns the second time (II Peter 3:9-14). We have to be stedfast enough in the faith to be holy even as God is holy (I Peter 1:13-16). In Christ Jesus, we are to be holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1:3-4). Now come back to an earlier point for a moment. Remember that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were citing themselves as examples for the brethren in Thessalonica to follow. Do you recall what they said in the second chapter of this letter? Notice: “*Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe*” (I Thessalonians 2:10). They lived in a manner in which others could see it was possible to be holy and unblameable!